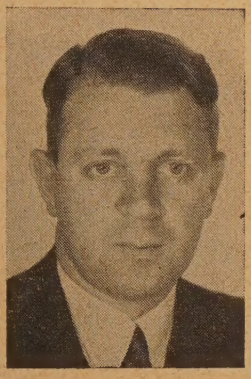
The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching



Alan Walker:

Preaching for a Verdict

David A. MacLennan • See You in Church

Loring D. Chase • Transmitting Religion

James B. Ashbrook • New Beginnings

Charles F. Banning • The Church and Labor

John Bartle Everts • Fellow Workmen

THE NEXT STEP

Beginning a Sermon Series by David Noel Freedman and Theodore A. Gill

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The Pulpit

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Pulpit Post

'Forbidden' Subjects

SIR: "A Communion Measure," by John Jackson Brown, Jr. (Aug.) is indeed one of the most daring sermons I've read recently. This is not because it was preached in the south and mentioned race relations but because it handled two other "forbidden" subjects, challenging our competition between denominations and the war problem. Amos must have sounded like this in his day.

DWIGHT H. ANDERSON.
Northside Baptist,
Ann Arbor, Mich.

On Choosing Your Authority

SIR: Perhaps it is just a case of choosing your "authorities." Once again Brother Enslin has taken it upon himself to set some of the brothers straight in a matter of exegesis of Hebrews 11:40 (July). Perhaps the erring preachers can find solace in the fact that J. Harry Cotton of Wabash College, who wrote the exposition of the book of Hebrews for the *Interpreter's Bible,* made the same "mistake"!

MARVIN A. JOHNSON.
Lakewood Community Methodist,
Long Beach, Calif.

Another Vote

SIR: When I started in the ministry several years ago, my pastor presented me with a subscription to The Pulpit and the *Christian Century,* saying, "Here are two magazines you can't get along without," and I have found it so. I have especially appreciated the little biographical sketches by which the authors of sermons were introduced to the readers, and found it much more convenient to have these on the first page of each sermon.

LAURENCE I. SMITH.
Morris Chapel Methodist,
Marion, Ind.

Change in Allegiance

SIR: It is easy to sympathize wit your depressed feeling about attendin a Cubs game (June Memo). As a Sc fan, I could suggest that you could g out of the cellar. Paul Wrigley doe send passes to clergymen upon occa sion. I have a practical reason, howeve for changing my allegiance. Since h makes his money from chewing gun and since this becomes a very annoyin thing to me—under tables, chairs an pews in the church—I had to change.

If it makes any difference, I preferre the biographical footnotes on the page where the man's article appeared. It be comes kind of a second research projec to look on the front cover or in the ap pendix for the information, and I ar lazy enough to enjoy having the foot notes at the foot.

ROYALD V. CALDWELL.
Faith United Church of Christ,
Chicago, Ill.

Bradford Jones' Message

SIR: Not in years have I read such a piece of writing as the Bradford Jone story (April). Let's hear more about th Man in the Gray Suit. Somehow we have missed Him in our feeble attempt to get the sermon "off the ground." Bradford Jones "speaks to our condi tion," as our Quaker friends say.

After preaching for nearly 60 years in Illinois, northern Wisconsin and southern California, I am now at age 74 serving as interim pastor in Birming ham, Ala., trying to interpret to my Dixie friends the meaning of the gospe of good will and understanding. All of us, north and south, east and west, in New England and the middle west must get to know the Man in the Gray Suit better.

CLAUDE W. WARREN.
Pilgrim Congregational,
Birmingham, Ala.

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

VOLUME XXVII SEPTEMBER 1956 No. 9

Memo:

OVER and over again comes the magic, breathless moment of beginning. In the concert hall, one of the most tingling instants is that brief, silent second after the chattering instruments have found their "A," and before the baton has swung them into the evening's music. At the theater, the most dramatic minute comes in the hush after the lights are lowered and just before the curtains swish open. At the beach, the brightest moment is that nervous, excited pause between sand and waves. At the track-meet, pulses are never higher than in the split-second between the line-up and the starter's gun. Over and over again comes the magic, breathless moment of beginning, when accomplishment is all ahead, and anticipation is everything.

In the church year, Rally Day is just such a moment of beginning. This is the time when we pause to savor the excitement of the start. The agitation of every other kind of beginning is all here in Rally Day. For a baton is about to fall, a curtain is about to rise, a church is about to plunge in, congregation is toeing the mark. Something is ready to begin, and we are ready for the start.

But what is about to begin? And for what start are we ready? Well, a new church year, of course. Every fall, when the weather changes, and the birds head south, and our breathless clocks relax after their summer-long dash to keep one hour ahead of daylight—every fall, the church sets itself for a new season of effort. Vacationers come back, schools reopen, and the church prepares its program which will keep the parish busy until another summer comes along. Slumbering organizations are reactivated, drowsing leaders come alive again, meetings are restored, the church looks forward across months of new effort and activity to its climactic celebrations of the birth, and then the passion and resurrection of its Lord. On Rally Day, at the very brink of all this motion, we pause to consider and propose.

But is that all that is beginning, then? Just another church year? No, but another church year of witnessing to the world for the Lord we serve. This new church year is not just a program of services and meetings, but is a renewed, sustained attempt to testify before the world about the Lord we love. The church year cannot be a calendar of events. It must be a continuity of effort, a testimony in your neighborhood of the power of God and the will of God and the loving mercy and goodness of God. That's what this new church year is: a refreshed, rejuvenated, augmented and amplified testimony and witness before the world.

And what a world we are being recalled to witness to. You can't tell me much about it, and I don't think I can add much to what you know about it. We witness before a world of grave peril and of glorious promise. Both peril and promise place their responsibilities on us. No need to spell them out here; you know them well.

In view of the magnitude of the task, what we are about to begin—a new church year—may even seem most startling for its insignificance. After all, the world needs to have its wounds bound up, its gaze lifted, its standards raised, its hopes revived. And what has a new church year, what has the Church of Christ to do with any of these? Why just everything, if that church itself can heal its divisions, broaden its vision, hold high its only Lord and press on to the Eternal City which shines at the end of the way and over all our ways.

And what has this particular year in your particular church to do with any of these? Why nothing less than everything, if now and there you can maintain peace and harmony, spread out the people's horizons, preach and proclaim the only gospel committed to us. And what have humble, individual churchmen to do with any of these on this Rally Day? Why they have to do with all of them, if on that day God will meet their dedication and resolution with his own gifts of strength and wisdom and patience and endurance. Then minister and parishioner together—faith kindling faith, hope firing hope, love warming love—will enlarge each other for the task before them both.

•

It will be plain from the above that unecclesiastical, practical old Rally Day meant a lot to me in my pastorates—and means a lot to me still. Remembering the annual excitement of beginning again sent me back to the files, looking up sermons saved from earlier occasions. Among them were some resulting from collaboration between Dr. David Noel Freedman and me. While he was teaching Old Testament and wishing he were preaching, I was preaching and wishing I could do something about my languishing scholarship. So while students stumbled over their translations, Noel made expository notes on the passages being recited. These notes then became grist for my rickety little homiletico-theological mill. One result is in this issue; others will follow. Noel and I will share all blame evenly—and probably clutch any credit singly!

T. A. G.

By Alan Walker

PREACHING FOR A

THE supreme purpose of preaching is to win a verdict for Jesus Christ. Preaching to a large degree fails if it does not bring the minds of men and women out of vagueness and uncertainty to a focus of decision. In every act of worship there are many people to whom religion remains unreal. Reality for such people lies on the other side of personal commitment to God. The one obstruction that can block the grace of God flowing into individual lives is the human will set in oppositon to God. Through the winning of a verdict from people, from leading them to a point of commitment, comes the opportunity for God to pour in his forgiveness and his grace. The true preacher is never an essayist or a moralist; he plans and works and pleads for a verdict to be given toward the Christ he presents.

There is a conception in the New Testament about the working of the Holy Spirit in human consciousness which is vital to the task of the preacher. It is centered around the idea of time as given in the use of the word *kairos*. Through the operation of the Holy Spirit, events and experiences move toward a climax, toward a focus, toward the end of a process, toward a crisis. God is ever striving to bring influence, desires and discoveries to a climax—the climax of decision. Within the framework of the freedom given to man, the Holy Spirit stimulates, condemns, calls, guides individual people in an effort to lead them to God. At the point when this process is far developed and all things are ready, a definite choice for Christ's sake can be made. Then the power of God can break into an individual life and make new beginnings possible.

Instrument of God

The preacher who knows his business is watching constantly for the moment of *kairos* in the life of people. He knows that in a congregation there will be men and women at various stages along the way toward the climax of decision. He will be sensitive to the movements of the Holy Spirit, believing that there will come moments in the corporate life of a church when the power of God is able to break through, carrying people to the crisis of decision. Such a preacher will expect people constantly to be seeking him out. He will make it clear that he is open for such opportunities of discussion so that he can interpret the experience of people for them and perhaps be an instrument in the hands of God for leading them on to the end of the process of preparation that has been going on in their lives. Likewise, he will plan special situations, special evangelistic enterprises if you like, where the accent is on decision, and where people will have the opportunity of confessing the faith that they are now ready to receive. It will mean that preaching on its every occasion will have its sharp focus. It will not forget the possibility that that hour may be a hour for deciding for someone.

There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to God. Any preacher therefore carries heavy responsibilities whenever he stands up to preach, for he must be quick and obedient and ever expecting that God will lead men amid the power of worship to their personal *kairos*, their personal discovery of God in Jesus Christ.

Paul's Conversion

Conversion is never instantaneous. It is always the end of a process. It is the climax which is instantaneous. A flash of lightning is instantaneous in the heavens, but only because there has been a long build-up of atmospheric conditions. Without preparation there can be no sudden flash of lightning. Conversion is the sudden flash of light which comes at the end of God's preparation in the human soul. It takes place as commitment allows the breaking in of God's love and power.

A study of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus is illuminating at this point. Paul's sudden acceptance of the Christian faith is often presented as the most notable example in history of instantaneous conversion. Yet only the climax was instantaneous. On the road to Damascus, Saul saw a blinding light; he heard a voice which said to him, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (A.V.). Here is a clear indication that a preparation had been under way.

What were these pricks or goads against which Paul had rebelled? One was that his friend of university days, a man named Joses, had suddenly become a Christian, selling his property and giving the returns to the infant Christian church. Saul must have been staggered that Joses, whom he knew, had become a Christian. There was the strange comment of Gamaliel, his beloved university

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ALAN WALKER, *who in April 1953 inaugurated the "Mission to the Nation" of the Methodist Church of Australasia, has been in the United States for the past year conducting a mission program under the Methodist Board of Evangelism. An editorial associate of The Pulpit, he has contributed sermons from time to time and has had articles in the* Christian Century.

VERDICT

rofessor, who had said in reference to the Chris-
an cause that men who oppose it had better be-
are lest "they be found fighting against God."
rom Gamaliel this was disturbing talk. Then there
as the martyrdom of Stephen. Saul of Tarsus was
n the judgment hall where Stephen was tried and
saw that his face was like the face of an angel."
le watched Stephen die, minding the cloaks of the
nurderers, noting his prayer, "Lord, do not hold
his sin against them." Saul could not forget that
aunting face and that matchless prayer. Likewise
e had seen many a Christian under persecution
nd torture and imprisonment and he had noticed
he quiet faith, the courage and the endurance. All
hese happenings became pricks, goads within his
nind. They prepared him for the Damascus Road
nd the final, successful onslaught of the Spirit of
God in his life.

John Wesley's Commitment

Another clear example of the Holy Spirit leading
oward *kairos*, climax time, comes from the life of
John Wesley. An Oxford scholar, Wesley seemed
stablished in academic life. Suddenly he startled
his friends by announcing he was going to America
s a missionary to seek the conversion of the In-
dians. Privately he admitted that he was setting out
n the hope of saving his own soul. After failing in
America, he returned across the Atlantic and while
on the ship encountered a terrific storm at sea.
Wesley found himself frightened of death, but no-
ticed Moravian Christians around him, at the
height of the storm, quietly singing their praises to
God and showing no fear of death. He was forced
to ask, "What have they in Christian faith that I
have missed?" He reached London and went on to
St. Paul's Cathedral, and there heard the choir
singing the 130th Psalm, "Out of the depths I cry
to thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice." We might
remember that the word "depths" in the Bible
comes near to meaning our word "subconscious." So
it was that this Psalm matched Wesley's thinking,
and he realized that out of the depths of his life a
cry to God was ascending.

That very night, at a quarter to nine of the clock
in a little room in Aldersgate Street, London, the
moment of climax came, and John Wesley in his
famous comment in his diary said simply: "I felt
I did trust in Christ my Savior." It was quarter to
nine by the clock, but it was more than that: it was
kairos time. It was the end of a process; the moment
had come when the Holy Spirit had finished his
work and all things were ready. John Wesley's
commitment was then complete and the power of
God broke in and changed a frustrated little clergy-
man into the greatest evangelist and social reformer
England has known.

Simple Presentation

No preacher in all history ever converted any-
body. Always the preacher must wait for God. He
must see the necessity for a period of "incubation,"
if we like to change the metaphor. He sees that
there must be a period of preparation, a build-up
in the conscious and the subconscious life in indi-
vidual people. Preaching is an offering to God in the
hope that he will use it in some people's lives for
further preparation and in others for carrying them
right to their climax. Nor should it be forgotten
that the very challenge to focus, and the response
obtained from people who are ready for commit-
ment, becomes a very powerful agency in the hand
of God for carrying other people on toward their
ultimate commitment. It is for this reason that
evangelistic preaching is so powerful, not only in the
commitments it wins and the verdicts it achieves
but in the way in which, amidst its intensity, other
people are carried forward, perhaps at a later date,
to reveal that they too are ready for the great mo-
ment of deciding. Hence every preacher, on every
occasion when he preaches, should have the expec-
tation that for somebody that hour may be the hour
of *kairos*. Therefore, fundamentally, the preacher
ever is pleading for commitment, for a verdict for
Jesus Christ.

If the winning of a verdict for Jesus Christ is so
central a function of the Christian preacher, how
may he most successfully achieve his purpose? The
first step toward effective evangelistic preaching
must be taken in the basic assumptions of the
preacher's mind. I am convinced that many of us
who preach assume that our hearers are much fur-
ther on the Christian road than is really the case.
There is a great deal of formal and conventional
religion in every church. There are scores of people
who know nothing of a firsthand experience of God.
These must be constantly in our mind and on our
conscience as we preach. Likewise, I believe there
is not enough preaching that is true apologetics.
Preaching can so easily be an interpretation of
assumptions that we imagine people have made and
yet these assumptions are not present in their
minds. To preach constantly with the conviction
that we are in the presence of people who are out-
side the Kingdom of God looking in, perhaps wist-
fully, rather than inside looking out, would alter
the tone of our message. There is a simplicity in
presentation which is of the very essence of effective
preaching that leads people to commitment.

Existential Approach

There is no doubt that preaching which wins a
verdict in these days must have a strong teaching
content. Christ always wants the whole man,
including his mind, brought into the Kingdom.
Therefore an evangelism heavy with emotion but
thin in thought-content is insufficient. Let no

preacher despise emotion, yet let no man place his trust in emotional responses rather than the call of the Holy Spirit. True preaching seeks to present a case convincingly in an effort to win the mind of the hearer. But intellectual argument without the fire of emotion often leaves men as they are. It is questionable whether the citadel of the human personality, the will, is ever reached without calling upon some of the power which resides in the emotions.

In seeking a verdict in preaching it must be remembered that commitment, to be vital and lasting, must be given in relevant, real-life situations. Jesus specifically refused to allow his followers to withdraw from the world, but left them in it with a power to overcome it. Much evangelism has sought to draw people out from the world, creating a "holier than thou" mentality which has alienated others from the Christian faith. It is a commitment to God in the midst of life to which Christ calls men.

There is a vagueness about many an evangelistic challenge which defeats its purpose. A month after they have answered vague calls to become Christian disciples newly committed Christians are often puzzled as to what discipleship means. It is at this point that preaching must be existential in its whole approach. It must see people as they are, embedded in living situations wherein their decisions must be recorded and in which the consequences must work themselves out. Therefore, in very specific and concrete settings, the appeal for a verdict must go forth.

The Australian Mission

In the Australian Mission to the Nation, which perhaps is the largest evangelistic effort yet seen in that country, a vital discovery has been made concerning the nature of evangelistic challenge. Each Saturday night in the Mission to the Nation series in Australia a special meeting has been held on the theme of the Christian view of love, courtship and marriage. Frankly, and with a practical emphasis, Christian principles as they relate to man-woman relationships have been presented. At the close of such addresses, definite appeals for commitment to Christ have been made. However, the appeal has been put into a concrete situation. The challenge has been issued that to be a Christian means accepting Christ's ideals of purity before marriage and fidelity after it. Then it is declared that living up to Christ's standards in this area of life is impossible without accepting Christ as Savior, through whom power alone can be given.

Now many would imagine that in such a setting, and with such a theme, commitments to Christ would be unlikely. The reverse has been the case. Placed in this concrete setting, calling for commitment to Christ in a specific situation has often brought greater results than more generalized appeals. It has shown that true conversions take place in the framework of a total gospel, not alone at the point where the Atonement has been presented. It has been in concrete situations, in existential preaching that verdicts have been won.

The preacher must call for a verdict always in a total-life situation. So often in evangelism, becau it is primarily concerned with individual decisio the whole emphasis has been on private, person religion. Many a preacher with an evangelistic pu pose has felt it was not his task to declare that t gospel is at once personal and social. The preach has virtually said at such times, "Social witness not my business. I do not deny the need for it, b that task falls outside my immediate commission Usually such a preacher adds that out of a chan of heart will automatically come a new social co viction.

Dangerous Half-Truth

The belief that it is enough to get the individu right with God and the world will automaticall come right, is a dangerous half-truth. I remembe the present Australian ambassador to the Unite Nations, Dr. E. R. Walker, showing some impa tience with a group of ministers when this kind emphasis was made. As an economist, he bluntl labeled as untrue the claim that conversion on th personal level is all that is necessary. He said tha eventually, if you are facing economic problem there must be economic thinking; if facing politica problems, there must be political thinking; or if fac ing international issues, there must be internationa thinking. Now the preacher, if he is to achieve whole-life verdict for Christ, must at least give th glimmerings of the total claim that Christ has o human lives. Commitment means the surrender o our political, economic and international judgment to the will of God no less than submitting the deci sions of private and personal living in Christ. Chris tian faith is discredited when new religious loyaltie are not matched with a heightened ethical con sciousness, where private piety is not reflected i public morality. No man is truly converted wh does not reveal Christian attitudes on issues of race economic, political affairs in peace and war.

The transference of principles accepted on on level of life to another level is not automatically carried on. To believe that it will be is to invit partial conversions which have been the curse o some forms of preaching. Such an emphasis open the door to the very peril of unethical religion men tioned above. Hence to accept or seek Christian al legiance without indicating that it means a whole life surrender to God is to obtain Christian disci ples under false pretenses. After all, Jesus wa thinking of more than geography when he said, "G into all the world and preach the gospel." Quietly he was saying to us all, "Go into the world o economics, go into the world of politics, go into the world of international affairs, and preach the gospel calling there for a commitment."

Whole-Life Commitment

In the Australian Mission to the Nation, already mentioned, a sentence was used which summed up the challenge to commitment. The people were asked to repeat in their own minds these words, "I commit my life to Jesus Christ, in the fellowship o his church." Thus it was made clear that commitment involved an acceptance of the Christian

urch. If it is false to call for a verdict apart from total-life situation, it is equally fallacious to sug- st commitments made outside the church.

So many of the verdicts recorded for Christ have t been permanent in their consequence because allegiance detached from the community of hristians has been offered. The New Testament ows nothing of isolationism in Christian living. he church is a part of the fact of Christ. Through e fellowship of the church, the newly committed hristian grows toward maturity in discipleship; e reality of fellowship holds the individual where herwise he would be lost; and through the church e is given the opportunity for witness and service.

gain, this kind of presentation must appear in me degree even as a verdict is sought. Always it ust be Christ in his church that is offered to men.

Finally, the preacher who would dare consistently nd with integrity to seek verdicts for Christ has to cognize the spiritual price that is involved in such ministry. I think I understand why many of us reachers stop short of pleading for a verdict for hrist. Five or ten minutes at the close of a service, hen the plea for commitment goes forth, are the ost spiritually intense and the most personally ostly moments of all in a preacher's life. The reacher himself, prior to the proclamation of the ospel must live at a depth of reality and with a ersonal focus of commitment that is costly in the xtreme. There can be no bringing of other men's inds and hearts to the focus of commitment unless he one daring to do it lives constantly at the place f commitment himself. Let no one of us who is not repared to pay this price imagine there can be a vinning of men and women into the Kingdom of God. Always on the frail, sinful lips of the Christian reacher who would point another way to Jesus Christ as Savior, must be the prayer of Jesus him- elf: "For their sake I consecrate myself."

A Child's 'Faith'

MY mother's death was the occasion of what some (but not I) might regard as my first religious experience. When her case was pronounced hopeless I remembered what I had been taught; that prayers offered in faith would be granted. I accordingly set myself to produce by will power a firm belief that my prayers for her recovery would be successful; and, as I thought, I achieved it. When nevertheless she died I shifted my ground and worked myself into a belief that there was to be a miracle. The interesting thing is that my disappointment produced no results beyond itself. The thing hadn't worked, but I was used to things not working, and I thought no more about it. I think the truth is that the belief into which I had hypnotized myself was itself too irreligious for its failure to cause any religious revolution. I had approached God, or my idea of God, without love, without awe, even without fear. He was, in my mental picture of this miracle, to appear neither as Savior nor as Judge, but merely as a magician; and when He had done what was required of Him I supposed He would simply—well, go away. It never crossed my mind that the tremendous contact which I solicited should have any consequences beyond restoring the *status quo*. I imagine that a "faith" of this kind is often generated in children and that its disappointment is of no religious importance; just as the things believed in, if they could happen and be only as the child pictures them, would be of no religious importance either.—*C. S. Lewis*, Surprised by Joy *(New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955). Used by permission.*

Ogi's Sermon

By Neal McClanahan

FROM boyhood I had had a desire to climb a snow mountain. Some years ago when we were spending a mid-term furlough in Switzerland my chance came. Two Swiss planning to climb the Balmhorn invited me to join them. The three of us hired a guide by the name of Ogi. He was short, broad-shouldered and experienced.

We left the pension at noon. At ten o'clock we reached a small log hut near the snow line. At three the next morning Ogi called us. Following his lantern we proceeded. Just at daylight we came to the first glacier. Here we stopped. Ogi, in broken English, said, "I want to talk to you about safety in mountain climbing. It depends on three things. First, put your feet exactly in the steps which I cut in the ice. Second, keep the rope taut, always. Never allow slack. Third, look up; do not look down."

He uncoiled the rope and tied it around his waist, then around the second man, next around the third, and finally around the fourth. Soon we began our climb, crossing ledges where every piece of ice which Ogi loosened as he cut the steps, went skidding down the mountainside out of sight.

At about one o'clock we stood on the peak and looked out on the range of snow-capped Alps—Mont Blanc, the Matterhorn, the Jungfrau and their allies.

I often recall Ogi's sermon, preached at the edge of a glacier. Safety in mountain climbing depends on three things: putting your feet carefully in the prepared steps, keeping the rope always taut and looking up, not down.

And what about safety in life?

One came to our world to mark out the steps. He prepared them for all who want to follow Him. Also, He offers a relationship between Him, His strength, His experience, and each one who seeks to climb with Him. He asks us to look up, to set our minds on things above.

Through the centuries millions have taken Him for their Guide and, following Ogi's advice, have at last stood with Him on life's summit.

NEAL MCCLANAHAN, *a former missionary on the staff of Assiut College, a United Presbyterian institution at Assiut, Egypt, now teaches Bible at Monmouth College, Monmouth, Illinois, and serves a country church.*

A Talk Broadcast on the Them
'Lift Up Your Heart

See You in Church

By David A. MacLennan

DAVID A. MACLENNAN *has been the minister of Bric Presbyterian Church, Rochester, New York, for the past yea In his own words, he "returned to the parish ministry, afte nearly six interesting years at Yale Divinity school," wher he was professor of preaching and pastoral care, because "th pull of the pulpit was too great to resist." His earlier pas torates included one of thirteen years' duration at Timoth Eaton Memorial Church in Toronto. On a speaking tri abroad last year he gave the Warrack Lectures, which wer published this past August by Westminster under the titl* Entrusted with the Gospel.

"BUT can't you be a Christian without attending church?" That question is put to clergymen and active lay members of our churches quite often. But not as much as a few years ago. America is having what is called a "boom" in religion, including church attendance. Watch the new churches going up, the old churches getting their faces lifted and their life revitalized! Well, can't you be a Christian without attending church Sunday by Sunday? The answer is, of course! Haven't you and I known wonderfully Christian persons who for good reasons (or bad) don't *brighten* the door of a church. When such persons are senior citizens unable to get out, or invalids or shut-ins, I think the Lord of the church comes to them in wonderful ways. In many cases they are active members of the church invisible — active in their love and faith, in their prayers. They are still in the church family, under pastoral care.

But if you are physically able to get around most days, can you be as good a Christian without regular, week-by-week participation in the public worship of God? Can a golfer be as good if he plays golf on Easter and Christmas only? Here is a musician — a master of the piano. He had years of training, but now he doesn't practice. Is he as good a pianist? Paderewski, the famous Polish musician, said that when he went one day without practicing he noticed it, two days and his family noticed it, three days and his audience noticed it.

"See you in church!" we sometimes say to our friends instead of that more modern and rather curious farewell, "Good-by now!" or "So long!" or "Take it easy." "See you in church" is a kind of quip, as if that would be the day and place to see each other.

Valid Reasoning

A small boy is credited with the verse — you may have heard Loretta Young quote it on her program:

> Whenever I go past a church
> I always stop to visit,
> So that when at last I'm carried in
> The Lord won't say, "Who is it?"

That's a good reason. But why go to church, when surely you can practice the Christian way and live by the Christian faith in your own home and on weekdays?

1. For one thing, real life is meeting — meeting on the highest levels, the levels of aspiration and prayer. Fellowship is heaven, said William Morris, a 19th century artist; fellowship is heaven, lacl of fellowship is hell. You say you've not had to hot an experience of fellowship when you attende church? Perhaps I shouldn't have said that so in elegantly — what you mean is that you didn't hav an experience of warm fellowship or friendlines when you last attended church. Sorry. Sometimes in spite of the best intentions of pastors and offi cials, the spiritual air conditioning works in reverse and instead of being human beings we act lik polar bears. But I'll wager that a cold reception by the manager never kept you away from your favor ite movie.

2. Then in church at worship we hear, through Scripture and sermon and sacrament, God's wor to us. "I came here," said a scientist, "to find a beam in the darkness." You can find it, and then yau can travel "on the beam" to the goal of meaningful life.

Therapeutic Value

3. But there's another reason: we need church and participation in worship, because there is actual healing in exposing ourselves not only to others assembled for the same high purpose but to the dynamic spiritual energies generated in worship. During the recent war an army nurse on 24-hour duty in a base hospital was overheard saying to a friend, "I'll simply cave in if I don't go to church." You say that when you've gone you haven't been comforted overmuch; but that you have been disturbed—made to feel your sinfulness, guilty and depressed. Well, sometimes therapy involves surgery, unpleasant "tests" and the like. Often we must feel worst before we feel better. But always there is ultimate healing of the deep hurts inflicted on us by our stupidity and failures, by the thoughtlessness or unkindness of others, by the ills and accidents of life on this planet.

A humble worker in one of George Eliot's novels was asked why when she worked a six-day week

he got up early and went to church in town. To her employer she answered, "Well you see, ma'am, Saturday night finds me all knocked down like ninepins, and going to church sets me up again!" Have you tried this marvelous "setting-up exercise" recently? Of course churches aren't supposed to be exclusively gymnasia for flabby souls nor nurseries for hypersensitive Peter Pans of both sexes—children who refuse to grow up! Nor are churches first-aid stations for the thin-skinned who have had some bruises in life's traffic! But He is there who is the Divine Physician, and he has, in Word and sacraments, what a Scottish saint called "singular medicine for sick souls."

The Path of Fellowship

4. As the children say, we're getting warmer. We're getting closer to the important reasons. Let's put it in the controversial words of an early church father. He said something which at first I rejected vehemently. And if it is interpreted to mean that only one visible church has the monopoly, I still reject it. But there is spiritual truth in it. Here's the saying, "Outside the church there is no salvation." For us this must mean that outside the fellowship, the community where Christ is known and loved and served, there can be no communion with Christ and therefore no salvation. An old catechism put it this way:

> May men be joined with Christ, and not with his saints?
> *No, nor yet with the saints, if not with Christ.*

You cannot really be on the way to true sainthood—to an integrated, happy, useful life, dedicated to the Highest—if you are living in isolation from God our Maker, Redeemer and Friend. One of the most important things ever said about worship was said by our blessed Lord: "Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). And he is! He never breaks his promise, never.

In the days of his human life, Christ went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day as his custom was. He was surprised that his parents did not know that he must be in his Father's house. He valued it. How much more should we. One statesman was asked why, after a very crowded week, a tight schedule, he got up every Sunday and went to his church. "Because I love England," he said. Well, a higher patriotism makes many start going for that reason. They love America, know that God must bless her with health and justice, with peace and true prosperity if Americans seek always to do God's will, and that the will of God is best discerned in the divine worship, and in the teaching of high religion.

A Company of Sinners

Don't stay away from church because some of us seem to be hypocrites, or have offended you, or because you don't like the preacher. The church is a company of sinners—and for them, penitent and forgiven. It is also fellowship of the forgiven and the forgiving. And as for the preacher, the church is greater than any, though by my observation of the preachers of all faiths that I know, on the whole they are worthy. And according to Scripture, there is no one righteous, not one.

But *He* will be there who can forgive us and renew us—can send us on our way to infect others with His truth and joy. We printed in our Sunday calendar the other Sunday these lines engraved on the floor of an old church where the famous John Wesley first preached:

> Enter this door
> As if the floor
> Within were gold,
> And every wall
> Of jewels all
> Of wealth untold;
> As if a choir
> In robes of fire
> Were singing here,
> No shout nor rush
> But hush . . .
> For God is here!

So it adds up to this: if you want to be counted among the Christians-in-the-making, you have an obligation to worship God in his church—not when you feel like it, not when you find it easy to get up on Sunday morning. *For Christian worship is a sacrifice offered to God in the name, in the Spirit, through Jesus Christ.*

See you in church!

A Student's Prayer

O LORD, who art the source of all wisdom and of all knowledge, since it is thy pleasure to give me in my youth such an education as will help me to live a holy and a good life, do thou at the same time illuminate my mind so that I may understand the teaching that will be given to me, strengthen my memory so that I may retain accurately what I have learned, and fill my heart with the desire to make good progress, that thus I lose not the opportunity of learning which thou dost offer me today. For this purpose, O God, give me thy Spirit, the Spirit of understanding and truth, of discernment and wisdom, which will enable me to profit from, and not to render useless, the trouble which is being taken to teach me. Grant also, O God, that whatever study I undertake I may carry through to its true end, which is to know thee in thy Son Jesus Christ, that I may be assured of thy grace and serve thee faithfully. And since thou dost promise to enlighten with thy wisdom and thy knowledge the lowly and the humble of upright heart, while thou dost cast down the proud so that they are lost in the vanity of their own reasoning, I ask thee, O my God, to create in me such true humility as shall make me docile and obedient to thyself first of all, but also to those whom thou hast appointed to teach me. And at the same time so dispose my heart that having renounced all its evil desires it shall search for thee ardently, and my sole purpose, O God, be to prepare myself henceforward to serve thee in the vocation to which it shall please thee to call me. Amen.—*John Calvin.*

The Next Step

By David Noel Freedman

and

Theodore A. Gill

NO religion ever gave any man a harder time than Jeremiah's faith gave him. For Jeremiah lived in one of those troubled times which are chronic in this earth. His was one of those recurrent periods when wars abounded, and not just rumors of wars. Crisis piled itself upon crisis for his little homeland, and all the crises were episodes in one continuing tension. The world of that day was divided into an East and a West, and Israel lying between was wrenched and yanked first one way and then the other by the contenders, Egypt and Babylon.

But military politics was not the only sickness of the times. Morally and spiritually the nation was mortally unwell, besides: there was corruption in national and local politics, bribery of officers, scandal in high places. There had been some attempt at religious reform while Jeremiah was very young, but it had not lasted long nor gone very deep. Ceremonies and feasts were diligently celebrated, but no one was much concerned about such weightier matters as justice, truth, mercy and love. The sacrifices were offered with real flair and finesse, but nothing very profound happened in the hearts of the congregations. The only sacrifices which God counts of any worth, a broken pride and a contrite spirit, were not asked by the priests nor offered by the people. Worship was flashy; but humble, halting, honest prayer was unknown. The people were stuffy and the government proud: men and the nation were far gone in the sin of self-righteousness. They lived in great self-satisfaction, ringed around with the circular argument they devised: "Because we are so good, we have been made rich; and the fact that we are so wealthy proves how good we are." The feeling was that they had the inside track with God, and he wouldn't dare to let them down.

Now in the midst of all this stifling smugness lived the sensitive young Jeremiah, who saw the will of God in a remarkable way and who heard the word of God with crystal clarity. He knew how wrong his countrymen were because he could see how right God was. He knew how bad his nation was because he could see what God regarded as good. That is what was meant when we said tha Jeremiah's faith gave him a hard time. If he had no been so conscious of the will of God and so con scientious about the word of God, he might hav been a happier man, in a purely vegetable, uncom plicated way. Then he could have compromised wit the forces at work in the society of his day. The he could have accommodated himself even to th destructive tendencies in that culture. But his faitl forbade such giving in, such capitulation. His faitl showed him just how bad things were around him— and because it showed him so much more about hov things should be, it showed him, too, how much worse things were as they were.

That is the serious, almost forbidding side of the faith we share with Jeremiah: it does not simply lift us with a "sweetness and light" interpretation of the world around us. It doesn't simply tell us we're getting better, and the world is getting nicer and we can all be happy if we think high and vote right and say our prayers. Instead, it begins by showing us what God wants for us and what God wills for the world. Instead of just puffing us up, that should give us real pause. For the minute we see what *we* should be, we see as well with terrible clarity how far short of that we really are. And then, as if that were not hard enough to take, our faith calls upon us to do something about the way we are. Faith shows us something that isn't very pretty, even though there is a promise in it, and our faith asks a great deal from us, even though it begins in a gift.

Absolute Commitment

So Jeremiah is the type of all believers in whom faith has not been just a pacifier, a soporific, a spiritual teething ring to settle us down and shut us up and keep us busy. Instead, he is representative of all those for whom the faith has been a great illumination mercilessly revealing everything that is not as it should be: the searchlight of the right picking out every wrong, the pencil-beam of the good probing every dark pocket of the bad. More, the faith of a Jeremiah is not finished when it has done its job of showing up. Then it demands concern. It is not enough to see that things are not as they should be. The believer is passionately interested in changes being made, something being done, so that what-is is budged along toward what-should-be.

Even that is not all, as Jeremiah discovered to his discomfiture and eventual distress. God asked

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at his concern be implemented in personal devo-
n and allegiance. Concern is not enough; absolute
mmitment was called for. He had to get to work.
e had to give his whole life to the service of God.
mature, inexperienced as Jeremiah felt himself to
, he had to respond to the call of God. He could
t give No for an answer. God tells him to get
arted, and Jeremiah balks a little. "But God, I
n only a child. I can't do what you ask. I don't
now enough. I haven't done anything like that
fore." But God won't listen to such alibis. "Don't
ll me you are a child," he says. "For wherever I
nd you, you shall go; and whatever I command
ou, you shall do. Don't be afraid, for I shall be with
u to save you."

Double Focus

So far we have been talking about Jeremiah, but
hope it is plain that all we have said has a double
ocus. We've been talking about ourselves, too.
here is little need to underline the parallel between
is time and ours. The world is divided again be-
ween an East and West. Once more the peoples of
he world are wrenched and tugged as the nations
train. Social evils are not strangers after all these
illennia, and religious hollowness is still a mark of
he age. Gods which are no-gods abound yet, and
erennially we are people with "revolting and rebelli-
us hearts." One description fits Jeremiah's fellows
nd ours: they and we suffer "mass tensions, politi-
al bafflement, moral confusion, disillusionment,
kepticism, insecurity and desperate fear of the fu-
ure." On the other hand, we share their foolish
ride, as well. *Our* self-confidence rises on the rein-
orced concrete, chrome trim, glass-brick structure
f our technical success. Self-satisfied, we too have
een superficial and indifferent toward religion, and
hat indifference is a grave peril, for, as John
Buchan said, "Rust will crumble a metal when ham-
ner blows will only harden it."

Our situation is Jeremiah's, brought up to date.
The nations which are meant to serve the King of
Kings and Lord of Lords, go awandering after false
gods. The family, which is meant to nurture the
children of God in his truth and faith, is itself
empty of spiritual substance. The church, which
was to live in singlehearted harmony and speak in
simple unison, instead is riven into groups and given
to raving. The church, which is meant to be one
community, is become instead a loose conglomerate
of cliques. Everybody senses something of all this.
Everyone sees at least a little of this sorry picture.
But we who call ourselves Christians—we see it
most plainly. All of it—every sad bit of it—shows
up in unavoidable brilliance when we look at our-
selves or at the world through the eyes of faith.
Then, as did Jeremiah, we see what *should* be—
with ourselves, with the family, with the nation,
with the church. Then, and only then, do we see
what actually *is*—and how bad that is.

But no more than for Jeremiah is our faith fin-
ished when it has pointed up the painful discrep-
ancy between the actual and the ideal. Not by a
long shot. Now it requires our concern as well. It
asks from us a passionate interest in something be-
ing done about all this, so that things-as-they-are
are at least turned toward things-as-they-ought-to-
be. Even that concern is only a halfway house to
what is finally expected from us. For to us as to
Jeremiah comes the call of God to whole-souled
devotion and absolute allegiance. As in the case of
the prophet, our concern gives over to commitment.
We have to get to work. Where we are, we have to
say the word, bear the witness, clear the way, turn
the wheel. The call may not now be to take up the
prophet's cloak, but it is now and always to do the
prophet's work, which is to testify in the most
telling way possible to the will and word of God.
Today that testimony must be in terms of words
and works that witness to him.

Absolute allegiance, that is what the Lord re-
quires of us. It is so enormous a demand that it is
almost easy to comply. "Yes, Lord," we may say,
"I will go wherever you send me, and I will do
whatever you order." Surely that is absolute alle-
giance, and we give it glibly enough. But will we
trill it quite so sweetly when the whole business is
dragged down out of the heaven of generality and
pinned to the earthly specific? It isn't hard to make
a big, windy, indeterminate promise—"I'll go where
you want me to go, dear Lord, I'll do what you
want me to do." But what happens when some
thorny specific lets the air out of that pneumatic
resolve? That is when allegiance comes to grief. And
that is why it were better if we began our commit-
ment where it will have to realized— with spe-
cific, concrete instances where our allegiance should
count for something if it is to amount to anything.

Measure of Allegiance

In this connection, of course, my mind turns on
Rally Day to the church at large, and this church
in particular. We ministers are as guilty as anyone
in regard to this problem of allegiance in general
and allegiance in particular. We preach and preach
and preach, and exhort and exhort and exhort, and
usually it is in the most nonspecific terms. We exalt
faith, and exhort obedience, and commend witness,
and urge testimony, but we rarely suggest exactly
what faith requires of us, and which obedience is
called for, and how we are to witness, and where
testimony is in order. The pulpit doles out green-
back generalities and expects the pews to change
them into the hard coin of the specific.

Not so today, however. Rally Day marks the be-
ginning of a new church year. It is the day when
plans are announced and hopes are aired. It is,
above all, the day when a Christian congregation
catches sight of what its commitment may mean in
the most specific, concrete, particular terms. It is
the day when the minister says to the congregation:
"You are Christians and as such you have pledged
your allegiance to our Lord. That necessarily in-
volves you in his service. Now what that service is
in your homes, in society, at your work, is a prob-
lem which all of us must work at all the time, trying
to discover his will for us where we are and then
doing it. But today I want to talk about our service
of our Lord in his church—in this church, this
year."

Never has the church had a more enormous responsibility than in this particular year of our Lord. She must be a conscience for the nations, she must reach across boundaries to effect her work of fellowship and reconciliation, she must reach out and lift up and heal those who need her help. And she must do all this by living and learning and loving as one family under one Father.

That is still too general. We in this church must begin our service here, by being in this corner a living and learning and loving community of believers.

Planning and Working

But none of that will just happen. If we are to be here and do here what God expects of us, we must plan hard and work harder. [Here the minister outlines and advertises the plans worked out for the new church year.] These plans are the bare outline for a living, learning, loving church. The bare outline. For, until they are filled in with active, busy, determined, dedicated attendants and workers, they are no more than private wishes and personal hopes.

Some of you may have seen at some time or other a formal Japanese garden. Occasionaly one is laid out and planned on a large American estate. One feature of such a garden is something called a "dry river." Wherever the Oriental garden architect wants a stream, a stream is constructed. Large boulders mark its banks, with fine gravel in between for its bed. But no water ever runs along these courses. These are "dry rivers" intended only for effect. And that is just what may happen to all the plans for this new year unless you, the members and friends of this church, fall to with a will. The leaders and officers of the church, who hope they have charted courses along which floods of new life will flow with full and leaping current, may find that they have instead laid out "dry rivers"—frauds of doubtful beauty.

We must rise to this new occasion, you know. We must! This is an imperative because this is one way our allegiance to Christ is actualized, made real. Here are specifics, waiting to be accomplished in his service. I'm not saying now that we should serve Christ, somehow, somewhere. I'm saying that here are A-1 opportunities for serving him in his church —not in that elusive church at large, but right here in this church—real, specific things that you can do to make your commitment something more than articulated air: opportunities set down, listed, spelled out. The challenge is thrown right at you. There is no one else to pick it up. Everything depends upon what you do with it. From now on we sink or we swim. We knuckle down or we knuckle under. We put up or we shut up.

No Excuses Accepted

Those are hard words, I know, and some will find the weight which they put on your shoulders unbearable. You will try to get out from under. Like Jeremiah you will bring up your youth or your inexperience. You will murmur about the altered conditions and say something about how the neighborhood has changed. I am not impressed. God was not phased by Jeremiah's youth or inexperienc Neighborhoods always change. The Church Christ is not determined by population shifts. Ther is no use trying to hedge on this account. If any one could have used such an excuse, who bette than Jeremiah? He really *had* lived through a pop ulation change. Every last one of *the* people wer carried off to Babylon, and Jeremiah was left wit the very dregs of the country. He really *did* liv among the embers. But that was no excuse he coul offer God to avoid the call.

Don't tell me we can't do all that our plans ca for us to do. I know we can. "For wherever I sen you, you shall go," God said to Jeremiah, "an whatever I command you, you shall do. Don't b afraid of them [of the problems, difficulties, discou agements], for I will be with you to save you. What we have to do is to will the extended servic of this church, and then put our whole selves behin that will. In that tremendous novel of the war, *Th Naked and the Dead*, one character observes, "Th trick is to make yourself the instrument of your ow policy. Whether you like it or not, that is the high est effectiveness man has achieved." The Christia has his reservation about the clipped brutality be hind that statement, but on our own terms th point is good.

We must make ourselves the instruments of ou Lord's policy. That means that the present mem bers of the church must break out of traditiona molds, and lift themselves out of too-deep groove and look for new ways to do old and new jobs, an be hospitable to new suggestions, and seek out nev directions. We must restore in every member an every department new life and pulsing dynamics This means something else, too. It means that a cal is sent out to every Christian within hearing, bid ding each to come and have a part in what we shal do here. We need you, we need your ideas, you strength, your energy. Here is where your genera Christianity can become specific. We want you. We want your interest and your cooperation. We wan you in our services, in our organizations; we wan you on our singing, or teaching or visiting staffs Join us, get busy with us. Together we may turn this gloriously glowing old church into a blazing torch of witness to our Lord.

Prayer at Table

The eyes of all wait upon thee, O Lord,
and thou givest them their meat in due season.
Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the
desire of every living thing.

LORD Jesus Christ, Desire of all nations, feed us with thyself even as we break this bread, and grant unto all men everywhere knowledge of thee, filling the deep hunger of heir souls; who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

—David Hoh, Lutheran missionary to Japan. At January convention of the Student Volunteer Movement in Athens, Ohio.

What Prayer Can Do

By George McNeill Ray

THE Old and New Testaments are moving dramas telling the colorful story of the communion between God and man. From primitive days to the present man has not actually understood what sincere prayer can do. He has never really felt the full impact of prayer in his life.

Prayer does not bend the will of God. It bends our will to his. Prayer does not actually put God to work, but it does equip us to work through him, his will to do. Prayer fashions the one praying into an instrument through which the will of God is released. It empties the pray-er of *self* so that he may be filled to overflowing with the Spirit of God with whom he communes. In this communion something radical must take place if God's will is to find fruition. Always, with sincere prayer, that something happens to the one in prayer.

Effect on the One Who Prays

Prayer can change one's personality. In God's Presence we become different persons. We begin to be new creatures from the very core. It is impossible to approach the Almighty and remain the same as we were before. In his Presence we see ourselves as we really are in the light of his purity and majestic whiteness. We begin to sense our uncleanness over against his righteousness. We utter with the prophet Isaiah, "Woe is me! For I am lost . . ." Sincere prayer causes us to know that "we have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us." Things we once loved we begin to hate. Things we once hated we now begin to see in an entirely new light.

Horizons do not necessarily change; colors do not change; our neighbor does not seem to be unlike his usual self. What has happened is: the one in prayer has undergone a major change in himself. He, through sincere prayer, has begun to accept the horizons about him; colors are more beautiful, and his neighbor after all is someone to love and respect. In communion with God *we change*, for we are *emptied* of *self* and are *filled* with the *Spirit* of God. We are made new.

Prayer can change one's position. Prayer restores us to our rightful relationship with God. Every man is in Christ whether he is conscious of it or not. It is through prayer by which man can be made to know this fact. Through prayer man can acknowledge and lay claim to this truth.

Disobedience clouds this truth. Sin ("missing the mark") separates man from God; thus he is placed in a most precarious position and relation with Him. Sin takes man from his natural state where God is King, man His subject. In his state of disobedience and rebellion man removes God from His throne by placing himself there. Yet in sincere prayer man sees the error of his way. He desires the return of himself to the place and position God created him for. It is in this contrite spirit in man that God's Spirit comes alive. It is in this humble spirit that God restores man to full harmony with himself.

Prayer opens the way for God to lift us out of ourselves, imparting to us his very nature and character. Our asserted independence of the Creator soon crashes and falls before God. Rebellion ceases. Resentment fades. Reconciliation abounds and God through Christ re-establishes himself as our heavenly Father. And we, his earthly children.

Prayer can change one's purpose. When prayer does not have as its sole object "Thy will be done," it is not sincere prayer. When the desire of the one praying is a cross fire against God's desire, he need not pray under the misapprehension that God will weaken and bend to his earthly whims and despair. It is "Thy will be done" or nothing at all. Therefore, as far as man's desires are concerned, sincere prayer can be dangerous. Dangerous in the sense that if God's will is released it could wreck man's little kingdom, smash his entire realm and change his minute world into something in which he had rather not live.

God's Spirit Takes Over

What we want or desire must be subordinate to what God might think our situation or predicament calls for. God takes the long view that reaches beyond the now. In sincere prayer we arrive at the point where we see as God sees, think as he thinks, want as he wants. Through communion with him we begin to discover his will, and it is then, and only then, that we pray "Thy will be done" without fear and trembling.

Through prayer we become like him, for he has emptied himself in us, and like the bay that waits upon the turn of the tide to be filled with the energy and strength of the sea, we are filled with his Spirit.

GEORGE MCNEILL RAY, *rector of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Henderson, Texas—once a Baptist minister—delivered this sermon at the College of Preachers in Washington Cathedral last year.*

Transmitting Our Religion

By Loring D. Chase

THE Christian church had scarcely been established and begun to spread before some familiar troubles began to arise. It is generally agreed among students of the Bible that the pastoral letters to Timothy and Titus were written about the problems that confronted the third generation of Christians. These letters may contain fragments of genuine Pauline material, but for the most part they are documents written in the name of Paul in the hope of bringing his authority to bear on the problems of the third generation. They speak as if in prophecy of what we may be quite sure was a matter that was giving the writer of these lines a great deal of current concern: "Understand this," we read in II Timothy 3, "that in the last days there will come times of stress. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, *holding the form of religion but denying the power of it.*"

That's quite a catalogue of undesirable people who, since they are described as "holding the form of religion but denying the power of it," were evidently among those who are within the Christian church.

Time of Opportunity

Well, the problem is still with us, the problem of transmitting the Christian religion from one generation to another in such a way that it may be received as a living experience, and not as an embalmed corpse in a gilded coffin. The coming church in which our boys and girls will be members must be made up of something more than dilettantes, sermon-tasters and religious snobs if it is to be a living church. And yet again and again God has seen the materials of religion corrupted, good works spoiled in the doing, and the letter killing those things which in the spirit ought to have life. Again and again an age of faith has been succeeded by an age of skepticism and superficiality. We know this, but how shall we keep the dreary cycle from taking another turn?

In saying this I don't want to give the impression that I regard the present time as a golden age in Christian history. But on the other hand, I believe that this is a time that is full of possibilities, and with you, I'd like to see the best of these possibilities realized in my children and in yours.

If this is to come about, then it isn't enough for us or for our children to "know about" God and to be "well informed," religiously speaking. It's not enough to have children or adults say, "This is interesting," although they must be interested; or to have them say, "This is part of our cultural background," although they must realize that the Christian faith *is* part of their heritage. Neither is it enough for people to say, "Why, this is beautiful," although there is much of beauty in all the expressions of our faith and that beauty ought to be appreciated and enjoyed.

Theory vs. Practice

If the church in its outreach to people—grown-ups and children alike—does not gain some deeper apprehension than can come from curiosity, or from pleasure at being entertained, or from a wish to please others, then it has failed. And I sometimes think that for the church to gain a lukewarm reception for its peripheral virtues is a worse failure than the arousing of a passionate rejection.

The difference between "knowing about" and having a "saving knowledge," a "saving faith," is the difference between studying electricity and tapping a live wire. It's all very well to know that "the current strength of a circuit varies directly with the electromotive force and inversely with the resistance," but that information by itself won't light any lamps or spin any armatures.

The difference between "knowing about" and having "saving knowledge" is the difference between studying physiology and enjoying good health, the difference between reading books about child care and the dynamic involvement in raising a family.

One approach by which we try to lead our children and our friends to what Paul called having "Christ dwell in our hearts through faith" is by pointing to the experience of others. We point to the faith of Abraham, to the courage of Moses, to the wisdom of the sages, to the social passion of the prophets, to the self-sacrificing humility of Christ and to the pioneering of Paul—or if we move

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our own time we speak of God revealing himself rough such spiritual giants as Grenfell, Kagawa d Schweitzer. But this is not enough. Lives of eat men all remind us we can make our lives blime, but if we are satisfied with indulging ourlves under a palm tree all day we won't care hether or not we leave behind us footprints on e sands of time.

One of the great temptations in the Christian rture of children is for parents and teachers to come anxious about the amorphous state of their ildren's souls and to impose on them with a kind parental or pedagogical imperialism the concepts hich have grown out of adult experience.

We scorn the Hindu practice of child marriage, which boys and girls have imposed on them by dults the formality and restrictions of a relationip for which they are by no means ready, either hysiologically or psychologically. But the choice f a mate is settled on the children before the natul adolescent time of choice making in these atters has even begun to arrive.

Presumably many of these children who are marled before puberty are able to adjust to the heavy xpectations of their culture, and learn to live with nd love their assigned partners. But it would seem o be a more maturing course—even if more perilous —for the partners to make their own free choice as hey come to the age when adult matrimonial and arental relationships are a felt and recognized posibility. I hope I'm not merely expressing a local rejudice in believing that though the risks of the Western practice may be greater, the rewards are reater too.

There's a parallel to this in the matter of Christian nurture. We're all too ready to unload upon hildren adult concepts which haven't been grown nto yet. We try to awaken by our words a loving esponse toward a God who is only vaguely conceived, when what is needed is the side-by-side levelopment of the concept of God, together with he ability to love in a genuinely outgoing way. And these two go together. "God *is* love," says the New Testament, and when the child can receive nd give love, he is growing religiously as well as motionally.

Developing Concept

But if a child grows up deprived of love and afraid to give love, the very concept of God, the loving Father, becomes filled with the same shadows that haunt his other relationships—particularly and specifically the relationships between the child and his parents; then God becomes another threat, conscience becomes twisted, and morality is laced with fear and hatred instead of with compassion and respect, regardless of the words that we use and have repeated after us.

So the basic condition of the transferal of religious knowledge—of traditions learned and of facts mastered into the power to live well and the ability to give and receive love—this condition is in the basic relationships in which a child is engaged: with his parents, with his brothers and sisters, with his teachers and with his peers—his playmates—at school and at church. If the channels of acceptance are open in these relationships, then in the child's immediate experience there can be what theologians call "saving knowledge, saving faith."

True, the chance of childhood may be missed, and the child may grow through adolescence into adulthood unable easily to give or receive true affection, and perhaps demanding attention and acclaim in place of the love he has not recognized, perhaps demanding things because things are the only guarantee of security he has known in the absence of love. But the great emptiness is there, the terrible need is felt, and as adults they reach a crisis in which they confront again the demands and the promises of the church. Here they must learn as adults what they should have learned as children—how to give and receive love, how to trust in their primary human relationships. What else did Jesus mean when he called a child to his side and said to the adults looking on, "Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven"?

Within the church we have more than one chance, because the fellowship of the church is wide in the span of ages that it encompasses, and deep in its reach toward the source of all love and security. And as the children soon come thronging down the aisles you must realize that this fellowship is one fellowship, that it is real and vital from the youngest child to the oldest great-grandparent, and that it extends from child to child, from grownup to grownup, from grownup to child and from child to grownup. It is in this fellowship, and particularly within the families encompassed and upheld by this fellowship, that the channels of true love are opened —and I don't mean this as a sentimental phrase— and the form of religion is found to be full of power.

Invocation at Dedication

Offered at Ceremonies for a Campus Library

O GOD, as we come to dedicate this new library,
We thank thee for worthy books—
Books that make us think,
Books that make us pray,
Books that make us laugh,
And all books that better man in his
Todays and his tomorrows.

Deliver us, we pray, from the idolatry of authors
And would-be authors who write
Just to see their names in print;
From the idolatry of a public
Which lets others choose what it is to read
And how it is to think.
Forgive and have mercy upon us for the wastage of
Forests on books that ought not
To have been written in the first place.

Lord, grant us fewer of worse and more of better books.
In the name of Him who never wrote a book,
But who in what he was has profoundly stirred the ages. Amen.

The Problem of New Beginnings

By James B. Ashbrook

FROM the moment we are born until we take our last breath we are confronted with a dilemma, but we put it in spatial terms: do we stay where we are or do we move out into the unknown? At every stage of life we face the choice of growing or shriveling as persons.

There is no one in here today who can avoid the dilemma of new beginnings. As freshmen we are leaving home. The awesome university gauntlet looms ahead with its prospects of joy and sorrow. As upper classmen we no longer have the seniors on whom to lean. The mantle of responsible adulthood begins to settle around our shoulders. As young adults we are launching our careers and starting our families. The carefree days are rapidly waning. As middle-aged parents we face the necessity of new patterns. Our children are leaving. The vibrant house settles into painful silence. As retired people, entirely new patterns of living must be created. Each new contact and each new task makes us wonder, "Will I make good? What will the reaction be? I've done it before, but can I possibly do it again?"

Self-Awareness Brings Separation

Really it makes little difference who or what we are. Each of us in his own life faces the same problem of new responsibility. The trimmings of civilization have not altered in the least the venture of becoming a person. The dilemma of new beginnings is age-old and ageless. Abraham, you remember, was called to leave the security of the past for the uncertain possibilities of the future. To do so he had to journey through the anxiety of the present. Abraham is known as the father of the faithful precisely because he responded to the summons to fulfill his destiny. It is to him we look this morning as we seek to understand our encounter with new beginnings.

Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldeans. Culture and religion thrived in the midst of economic prosperity. Ur stands for all that is safe and comfortable and stable in life. Here we see our hard-won accomplishments and security: a nice home, academic degrees and recognition, a thriving business, mastery of a specialty, a small circle of carefully sifted friends and the satisfaction of having arrived at a firm faith.

In the midst of such safety Abraham heard a command rising out of the ground and source of his beings. "Get out—leave your land, your relatives and your father's house." To become aware of life's possibilities means cutting ourselves off from the past. No longer can we complacently accept what has been. Awareness of potentiality destroys the status quo. New beginnings mean giving up the security we have acquired: the accumulation of accomplishment and the prop of family protection. The umbilical cord that has nurtured our past will strangle our future unless it is cut. One of America's noted creative artists describes the beginnings from which emerged her genius. "Following the promptings of a persistent instinct," she writes, "I turned my back on all I had done and faced the dark."

When we get into new situations, we want to cling to the past. It isn't easy to give it up. The school-aged child may revert to earlier behavior under stress. He will respond like a baby in such ways as sucking his thumb or slurring his speech or throwing tantrums. The college student continues to wear pins or emblems heralding high school successes. The graduate dangles Greek-lettered keys before the uninitiated. Whenever we find ourselves in a new group we gravitate as quickly as possible to the same familiar faces. Because we are uneasy about meeting new people we hang on to those we already know. In one way or another each of us uses our past as a security crutch in the uneasy present. But growth and creativity mean giving up the status quo. They mean leaving behind what we have cherished from childhood.

Growth Brings Apprehension

Awareness of unrealized possibilities not only destroys acquired security, it also drives us to create new patterns and qualities of life which we only partially can conceive. After telling Abraham to throw off the past—his land, his relatives and his father's income—God tells him what he will receive in return: "the land that I will show you." And as the Book of Hebrews put it, "He went out, not knowing where he was to go." To turn our backs on the past is to face what that noted artist called "the dark." We move from a certain and secure yesterday into an uncertain and insecure tomorrow. Real growth brings apprehension.

Possibilities only become actualities, expectations only become realities, dreams only turn to facts, by

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ur passing through this experience of anxiety. In nort, to begin any new adventure in life is to be- ome anxious. It is to feel the tension between what and what can be, between stagnating or growing. s the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard so learly saw, "To venture causes anxiety, but not o venture is to lose oneself."

So, like Abraham, at the promptings of the center nd depth of our souls, we open up new beginnings. new class, a new job, a new relationship, a new esponsibility is created. However, something often appens. Abraham's father had started out for the nknown. Then we come to these tragic words in he Biblical narrative, "But when they came to Haran, they settled there." None of us escapes the emptation to give up the struggle for the sake of ecurity.

You know what it's like. You can hardly wait to tart something new. You are all keyed up. The first ew days or even weeks you are conscientious. Everything is done perfectly and on time. Distrac- ions are ignored. Then the first flush of enthusiasm ades. You begin to take a more "realistic" view of ife. After all, why kill yourself? What isn't done oday can always be done tomorrow. Only tomorrow never comes.

Tendency to Give Up Struggle

There is the tragedy of so much of life. We do begin on something creative, but the pressure be- comes too great. We want to give up and settle down. The student finds it hard to ignore the at- traction of writing several term papers on the same subject. After all, we rationalize, one ought to try to do a thorough job. How convenient it is to dis- cover we can read the same book for different courses. That gives a chance really to understand it. The professor constantly wrestles with succumbing to the lure of using the same course outline and lectures without revision. After all, we say to our- selves, facts are facts. In our relationship with others we keep to the same little circle (ought I to say cage?) of friends and acquaintances. Newcom- ers are greeted politely and left to go their own way. We take a tentative step into the unknown. Then we quickly settle down and build a fence to protect us.

We embark on the sea of life, launching out into unknown beginnings. But the perils of the journey frighten us. We long to return to the safety of pleas- anter days. When we pull back, the security of the past is no longer safe. To give up the struggle would mean being "sucked down" into quicksand. Spir- itual death would result.

There are perils and uncertainly in moving for- ward. There are greater dangers, though, in aban- doning the venture. What we need to do is just to keep moving. As you well know there will be mo- ments when you wonder if you can create anything of significance, whether it be a term paper or a friendship or a family life or a vocational oppor- tunity. In the midst of one of her most discouraging periods, Agnes deMille shared that kind of agony with Martha Graham. "Practically, Martha, what do I do tomorrow between waking and sleeping?" "You make yourself a program of activity," came the reply, "and you do not stop once. . . . You keep going. That is your only responsibility." Whenever we feel the tendency to settle down in Haran, we ought to remember those words. "You keep going. That is your only responsibility."

Freedom Is Expansive

As we continue reading the Biblical account, we discover God did not let Abraham rest comfortably for long. Abraham pulled up stakes. He left security and comfort for the land of promise. But that prom- ised land of fulfillment is not as we might expect it to be. We are told Abraham journeyed there as "in a foreign land, living in tents."

When we begin to find ourselves and our poten- tialities, we shall be in strange and unfamiliar ter- ritory. There will be no permanent landmarks to guide us and no places to settle permanently. A movie director came across the following introduc- tion in a script: "Words fail to describe the scene that follows." "That," stormed the director, "is a great help." Whether we like it or not, that is the way of the promised land. Words fail to describe our experience in it, for we sojourn as in a strange country. To become a person is to experience free- dom. Yet freedom is expansive. There is constant movement and no arrival. Words fail to describe what lies ahead.

In the adventure of life we are never finished. As someone once remarked, life seems to be all road and no arriving. Only as our achievements become springboards to further accomplishments will they gain significance. For example, a couple grows in their marriage partly because in their younger years they began to move freely and easily into an in- creasingly wider and deeper friendship with mem- bers of both sexes. When you stand at the altar and promise to love and cherish each other, you are beginning a journey into a strange land. You will never know completely where your path of begin- ning is going to lead. It reaches out beyond the horizon of your immediate understanding. The rain- bow of promised fulfillment is something that is never fully grasped. It always lures us onward, for freedom is expansive. We never arrive. We only journey as pilgrims in an unfamiliar land.

Trust Creative Divine Power

Up until now we really have been looking at the problem of new beginnings from a partial and dis- torted vantage point. We have seen that growth brings an awareness of possibilities. The acquired security of the past has to be discarded. New pat- terns have to be created. There is no way to avoid the anxiety of the uncertain future. None of us escapes the inclination to abandon the struggle. Yet if we are to become persons, we shall live in that blessed state as in a strange place. There will be no secure conditions or places or relationships.

To complete our understanding of the experience, we need to see the perspective of the Biblical nar- rative. We are told Abraham was empowered to face that task because of faith. It was "by faith" that he left Ur "not knowing where he was to go."

(Continued on page 21)

The Church and Labor

By Charles F. Banning

WHENEVER a minister attempts to speak on a question of industrial or social relations, leaders of both labor and management lift a cynical eyebrow and think if they do not say, "Mind your own business, preacher. This is out of bounds for you." They are wrong. Human relations is the business of the church. The founder of the Christian church was a carpenter. His two greatest apostles were a fisherman and a tentmaker. The church made its early growth among the "common" or working class of people. The Protestant Reformation was a revolt against a church which had drifted too far away from the needs of the working people.

Personally, I think I have a right to speak on industrial relations. I come from a long line of working people. My father was a railroad blacksmith, a union man. My brother was a boiler maker, a union man. I worked for the Rock Island Railroad, belonged to the union, and I hold a withdraw card from the union I joined at that time. If you ever hear of a wealthy man by the name of Banning, it is safe to say he is not a relative of mine. Now let us look at our question.

I

It is quite commonly believed that labor is outside the church. This is not true. A large percentage of American laborers are European in their background coming from Italy, Poland, France, Spain and Ireland. These countries are Catholic. Their sons have been faithful. If you visit a Roman Catholic church today you will find a goodly proportion of laboring people. American Negroes make up quite a percentage of American workmen and they are churchgoing people. Many of the smaller Protestant groups such as the Salvation Army, sects like the Jehovah Witnesses, and many Pentecostal groups enlist their followers largely from the laboring class of people, and they are growing rapidly.

If a thorough, honest census of all employers and employees were taken, it would show that the proportion of each group attending church is about the same. Oh yes, half of labor is outside the church but half of the people of the United States are outside the church, too.

II

However, the question remains, and it is an embarrassing one, why is half the laboring class outside the church? Why have so many, who used to attend, left the church? May I suggest three reasons.

Through the centuries of Christian history there have been occasions when the control of the church has been taken out of the hands of workers and given over into the hands of the more financially prosperous members. In New Testament times the church was almost entirely a laboring class movement. The New Testament notes that not many influential people were followers. Then Constantine took over and gradually the scene shifted. The church became wealthy and its control passed into the hands of the wealthy. The Reformation was a protest against the misrule of the more financially influential at the expense of the poor. In 18th century England Christianity had become largely an upper class institution. This inspired the Wesleyan revival which started in the open fields and brought the laboring class back to the church.

Today many laboring men have left the church because they feel that it is run for and by the employers. They accuse the ministers of "tempering the wind to the fatted calf rather than the shorn lamb." They feel that there is too little democracy in the average church, that decisions of policy are made by a small group, that the big giver wields too much power. There is too much truth to this claim for comfort. A glance at national boards of several of our Protestant denominations reveals the names of many people whose chief recommendation apparently is their checking account. Where the church has ceased to care and has traded its birthright for a mess of pottage, it has lost labor. Where this is true one might add that labor has not lost much in leaving.

However, the number of churches where this is true is small. After thirty years in the ministry, during which time I have been on the official boards of my denomination and interdenominational groups, I have seen very little of it. I have also noted that in the average labor union decisions are often made by a small group and union men have complained to me that democracy is not 100 per

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t operative in their unions. Let us not blame the rch nor the union overmuch for human frailty. her let us set about to correct it.

nother reason why some have left the church is t there are certain underlying fears, which give to much industrial trouble, and which cause laborer to distrust any institution. It is basic t one understand these fears, these ghosts that nt the fireside of every laboring man. They are ness, unemployment and old age. What if dad s sick? What if he gets laid off or loses his job? at shall dad and mother do when they get too to work? As a growing boy, I lived under the dow of these specters, and I know how real y can be. I was pastor of a church during the pression, and I know what unemployment did to s and homes. Somewhere the laboring man has eived the impression that the church does not nt him around if he cannot pay his pledge. I ow of no church that has ever withdrawn the ster's invitation, "Come to me, all who labor and heavyladen, and I will give you rest."

Labor needs to remember that every employer es with three fears also. Three unwelcome guests with him at his fireside every night. He won-rs, "What about the market? What about govern-nt regulation? What shall I do if I have labor uble?" As labor and management sit down at e conference table these fears always hover near. labor and management bow together in church eir fears are not left behind. The minister is pas-r to both. He directs all hearts toward the one ther of all men.

A third factor that has operated against church ndance has been deliberate misrepresentation. bor and management still attack each other, in riodic crises, foolishly and falsely. The church lls both management and labor to repentance for brotherly attitudes toward each other.

The church, management and labor all need to alize that it is only within the framework of our esent form of government that we have any free-m or hope. What happens under dictatorships or mmunism? Labor unions are eliminated. Employ-s lose everything. If the church will not fall into e it is soon eliminated. Whether we know it or t, the day for name calling, misrepresentation, ckbiting and table pounding is long past. If either e loses security, both will lose it. Inflation con-mes both wages and profits. Neither side in any spute has a monopoly either on wisdom and gen-osity or selfishness and foolishness. Industrialists d labor leaders have at times shown great wis-m, at other times extreme childishness, because th are human. Of course the AFL–CIO is in litics. So is the National Association of Manu-cturers.

III

Where does the church stand? Is it pro-labor or ro-management? The church must not take sides ecause her members are on both sides. The church ants justice and security for all. She knows that rogress does not move in a straight line but swings ke a pendulum. The church must be the church, not an umpire, not a contestant, not a judge. Four principles the church must ever hold high and, with a few exceptions due to human fear and frailty, has held through the years.

1. Human personality must always come first. In any decision the primary issue must not be wages, or profits, or victory, but people. What will this do to little children, to young people? The question to be decided is not what will this move do to industry or labor unions, to markets or foreign trade, but to men.

> Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.

Why did slavery go? Why is child labor largely gone? Why are sweatshops wrong? Because of their effect on peoples minds and souls. The rich fool in the Bible was a fool not because he was rich but because he thought entirely in terms of barns and crops rather than neighborliness and human character. The church will insist that the yardstick of human relations must be one of personality values.

2. The attitude of good will and brotherliness must prevail. No one can win a conflict with public opinion against him. Even with 100 per cent justice on your side, you lose if you show a wrong spirit.

"Peace to men of good will" is not idle sentiment. It is down-to-earth, good common sense. A scientist was asked, "What invention do you look for in the next ten years that will mean most to humanity?" He answered thoughtfully, "Not any invention so much as a better way of getting along together on God's earth."

3. The church must insist that the motive of service is the only motive bringing peace and happiness. He who tries to get the most will in the long run get the least. Selfishness is always short-circuited. Here is the test of government. When it tries to help itself rather than the people, it is doomed. When labor or management adopt any other motive, perhaps calling it "enlightened self-interest," they close the door to progress. This applies to the church also. It must Christianize commerce or commerce will commercialize the church.

4. The church holds that God has a stake in all these matters. We are all God's children. This is God's earth. The Kingdom of God is his goal. It is the "one divine event toward which creation moves." History is the story of God trying to lead men to accept his way of dealing with each other. Those who have refused have gone down in defeat. Perhaps it is trite to say that men go to war because they have forsaken and refused God's way, but it needs to be said. Human values, brotherly attitudes and service motives are all within God's plan for his children. Thus it is "Christ or chaos."

Many people today are unhappy because they have selfish motives, hateful attitudes and secular values. They try to cover themselves with a thin coat of piety but it does not work. Selfishness is destructive whether it be covered with a veneer of religion or not. It hurts. In the name of her Master the church calls all men from all classes to follow his command and his example: "As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them."

Fellow Workmen with God

By John Bartle Everts

I Corinthians 3:9.

EACH year at this time we pause to honor those who by their skill and industry have made important contributions to the growth and well-being of our nation.

On this Labor Sunday we pause to think also about our labor relations with God. St. Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, gives direction to our thought. "We are laborers together with God," he wrote, or as the Revised Standard Version translates it: "We are fellow workmen for God."

The first thing, St. Paul calls to our attention is that Christianity is a religion of work and workers. The Bible opens with the story of God at work in the creation of the world. Jesus was a carpenter. The first disciples were men busy at their trades on the lake or in the market place. The great apostle himself was a tentmaker. The early converts to the Christian church were people who toiled.

Biblical Heritage

To many of the people of Jesus' day this was not the popular mood. If Jesus had lived in Alexandria, Egypt, he would have run into the hostility of teachers who taught that a manual laborer had "fingers like a crocodile and a smell worse than fish spawn." Men were therefore told that hard study was a safeguard against having to work with their hands. Or if the Master had taught on the streets of Athens, he would have collided with the objection of Aristotle who said that mechanical arts are far from godlike and make the body, soul and intellect of free men unserviceable for the use and exercise of virtue. Or, again, if Jesus had taught this doctrine of labor on the streets of Rome, he would have found the same situation. Even Marcus Aurelius the Stoic held that "those who profess mechanic arts are in some respects no better than idiots."

Only the Hebrews among ancient peoples held a worthy concept of the worker. Every Jewish boy was required to learn a trade. We in America are inheritors of this tradition. We hold in high regard those who work.

To be sure, Christianity has its hours of meditation, of quiet prayer, of worship, but as we follo Jesus at those times when he withdraws from th crowding ways of life to the mountain top or th desert, we are at once aware that these are tim of preparation for renewed work. We need suc times, even as the Master did, but we must nev allow ourselves to think that Christianity is on that. The houses of refuge we find away from th batterings of life are stopping places for spiritu and physical refreshment, but they must never b come permanent dwelling places for us.

The Master's Work

There are times when all of us feel that the ide is to be "wafted to the heavenly clime on flowe beds of ease," and there are some branches of ou Christian faith which set that as a goal for lif but it is not the goal Jesus set.

The degeneration of Christianity comes when fo lowers begin to seek a line of least resistance, compromise with moral and spiritual laws; whe they adopt a policy of wait and see; when the allow the distinction between the material and th spiritual to become blurred.

Christianity thrives and makes its greatest im pact when its followers are hard at work carryin on the Master's work in his Spirit and with h vigor. And just to the extent we leave that wor undone, to that extent the work is not done fo God. In his plan for the universe and for us, Go parceled out certain areas of work for us to do fo him. It is a sobering and frightening thought, isn it? You remember the line from Edward Markham poem "The Man with the Hoe" which tells us tha each of us "is given a day and his work for the day. Yes, Christianity is a religion of work and worker

In the second place, Paul points out that Chris tianity is a cooperative venture. "We are worke together." Christianity began with groups of peopl working together. Jesus and the twelve disciples Paul, Silas, Barnabas, John Mark, Timothy an the others; all these working together so that her and there throughout the Mediterranean world th church was organized. And it was groups of Chris tians working together in these churches whic made them strong centers of Christian influence an strong bulwarks against the evils of their day.

Rugged individualism may have its merits else where but it has no place in the Christian move ment. Individuals merge into the common good o the church and lend their united strength to th

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JOHN BARTLE EVERTS *joined the ministerial staff of Christ Church, Methodist, New York city, in the spring of 1955. A graduate of Yale University and Drew Theological Seminary, he has served several other congregations of the New York Conference and has proved a competent member of Conference committees.*

going of Christianity. Christians never consider ether they feel like doing the thing that needs be done, but rather what they can do for the mon good and for God. Oh, I know there is meone here with a mind for history who will say t some of the great leaders in the story of the ristian church have been rugged individualists—n like Martin Luther and John Wesley. It is true t they stand out, but they recognized the prin-le about which we are talking—that until there re individuals working together under the great-ss of their leadership nothing permanent could accomplished for Christ and his church.

We find illustration of this in the history of the ethodist Church. George Whitefield stands out as e of the greatest preachers not only of Methodist story but of the Christian church. Great crowds cked to hear him wherever he preached. But the cord is that his preaching brought no permanent sults. No churches were established. No leader-ip was inspired to carry on. On the other hand, ere is John Wesley—a good preacher who brought e message of salvation in such a way that thou-nds of sinful lives were turned to God. He gath-ed these individuals into societies, so that, united, ey strengthened each other and were able not ly to change the religious atmosphere of their me but also to save England from revolution and om moral and spiritual degradation.

The Rule of Survival

Cooperation is the rule of survival in the ma-rial realm. It is likewise the rule of survival within e individual church and in the Church of Christ roughout the world. In a day when pagan ideolo-es threaten, it is more than ever important that hristians do not commit the destroying sin of ivision. One of the heartening signs of our time that the Christian church is uniting in areas of rge cooperation and, to a greater extent than ever efore, is presenting a united front to the forces hich seek to destroy it.

This cooperation, to be in any sense effective on he larger level, must begin in the local church and ith the individuals with whom we live and work.

Having established these two principles: that hristianity is a religion of work and workers, and hat it is a cooperative venture of Christian work-ng together with Christian, we are ready to con-ider the third aspect of Paul's statement that we work *"with God."* With God—there is the differ-nce in our approach to a task.

The story is told of a stranger who saw three tonecutters at work on a building. Being curious bout their work, he asked the first what he was loing. The reply came quickly: "I'm working for ny bread and butter." Turning to the second stone-utter, the stranger put the same question. "Can't you see? I'm cutting stone," he replied. The third stonecutter, asked the same question, replied, "I'm building a cathedral." There you have it—the Christian concept of work, a coworker with God so that every task becomes the building of a cathe-dral for the worship of God. It is the concept that banishes the labels "sacred" and "secular work," for all work is sacred when we work with and for God. Only man makes distinctions.

While man must work for bread and butter to live, and while often he is a cog in the wheels of industry, working with God gives new luster to his labor. For now there is a new vision, new insight into the task and a new purpose for work as man sees that he is a helper of God in building a new world—helping Him in the task of building eternity in time.

Christian Responsibility

Being a fellow worker with God is a full-time job. We either work with him or against him with every word we speak, every act we perform, every deed we do. A man's profession, his work, his labor is the first great field of his cooperation with God.

Some years ago Washington Gladden wrote the "Worker's Pledge":

> One thing I am resolved upon: I will not be a sponge or a parasite. I will give an honest equivalent for what I get. I want no man's money for which I have not rendered a full return. I want no wages that I have not earned. If I work for any man or any company or any institution, I will render a full, ample, generous service. If I work for the city or the state or the nation, I will give my best thought, my best effort, my most conscientious and efficient endeavor. No man, no body of men shall ever be made poor by their dealings with me. If I can give a little more than I get every time, in that shall be my happiness. The great commonwealth of human society shall not be the loser through me. I will take good care to put more into the common fund than I take out.

Here is a pledge which needs a real and deep sense of fellowship with God and a sense of Christian responsibility to translate it into the terms of daily living and working.

> O Thou who dost the vision send
> And givest each his task,
> And with the task sufficient strength:
> Show us thy will, we ask;
> Give us a conscience bold and good;
> Give us a purpose true,
> That it may be our highest joy,
> Our Father's work to do.

Problem of New Beginnings

(Continued from page 17)

We too can venture into an uncertain future with the confidence of Abraham. Faith is simply trust in God as we know him in Christ. Faith gives us an inward certitude and firmness in the face of the anxiety of possibility. We believe it is God himself who makes us restless. We can trust the creative impulses and urgings within our hearts. These come from him who is the ground and source of our lives. The summons to pull up stakes and forge new pathways is not simply the result of our own uneasy spirits. The source of dissatisfaction without security is rooted in that which is ultimate. Wherever we are, whatever our circumstances, God calls us to leave past certainty to live in the uncertainty of the promised land. He strengthens us for the venture. He gives us faith and trust in his promptings and guidance.

Religious Window Dressing

By Merril S. Heinz

It was said of old: "They come to you as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear what you say but they will not do it; for with their lips they show much love, but their heart is set on their gain." (Ezekiel 33:31) But in these latter days we are told: "According to your faith be it done to you." (Matthew 9:29)

KNOWLEDGE is the spy for faith, but faith and knowledge are not identical twins. Faith is the treasure, knowledge is the key which opens it; but faith and knowledge are not two peas out of the same pod.

Many people are "in the know" when it comes to the top ten on the hit parade, or the ten best dressed men or women, or the ten most active stocks on Wall Street, and even the Ten Commandments; yet with all knowledge at their fingertips, they lack the faith that moves mountains or changes morals or even moves its possessor into the Kingdom.

Tremendous Difference

On his way from raising the daughter of Jairus, our Lord was accosted by two blind men who cried out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." To their plea Jesus replied, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" Then the blind were healed with these words, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened according to their *faith*, not their knowledge.

Doctor Luke tells about the Roman centurion, whose servant was healed, of whom our Lord spoke these words: "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." And the centurion's servant was healed by "such faith," not by "such knowledge."

The all-time favorite, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever *believes* in him should not perish but have eternal life," makes quite a distinction between faith and knowledge.

Every once in awhile, therefore, we ought to polish up our memories with reminders of the tremendous difference between knowledge and belief—since most of the problems of individuals and families and nations come about because to know is easy but to believe and have faith is hard. Knowledge is almost as easy as the proverbial falling off a log, and if we don't know something ourselves we know where we can get the answer. A dictionary, an encyclopedia or an expert in the community can usually be depended upon for the answer. But most of us have found that faith and belief don't come easily from books or encyclopedias or specialists.

Other Side of the Coin

It's easy to find and know the words which say that "love will overcome the world," that "turning the other cheek is better than retaliation," and that "giving is better than receiving," but to believe these things and stake our lives, our family, our nation on them is the other side of the coin.

Faith doesn't come easy—it comes hard. Faith never was simple, and since the beginning of recorded history the problems and headaches of man have beset humanity because men have known something but they haven't believed it. Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden *knew* they should not eat of the fruit of the tree of life—but they didn't believe it, especially in the face of temptation. The people in the time of Noah had knowledge, or at least an inkling, of the destruction that was to come upon them, but they really didn't believe it. David, the shepherd boy who became king of Israel, knew all about the seventh commandment, but he didn't believe it when he plotted to take another man's life in order to possess the man's wife. Daniel in the lion's den had knowledge *and faith*, and staked his life on it and lived. Ananias knew well that lying is contrary to the will of God, yet he didn't believe it, and with lots of knowledge and no belief his life was required of him. Of the two thieves crucified beside our Lord, both had knowledge of the Son of God, but only one believed what he knew.

Modern Application

Certainly we would like to say that we in our generation *believe* what we know to be true—that we have come a long way since the days of Adam and Eve and Noah and David and Daniel and Ananias. But have we?

We read in the Scriptures and *know* that hate begets hate and love begets love, and that love overcomes the world. But do we believe it? Is it true today that we no longer despise and hate or are envious or jealous? That all men and all peoples are our friends and brothers? That no denomination tries to get ahead of its nieighboring congregation? That all members of feuding families have buried the hatchet, and now speak to each other in

(Continued on page 24)

MERRIL S. HEINZ *is pastor of the Shade Creek Congregation, Church of the Brethren, in the Alleghenies near Windber, Pennsylvania.*

THE VITALITY OF FAITH

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Abingdon Press

Window Dressing

(Continued from page 22)

love and understanding? Surely we know all about good will and brotherhood and cooperation—but we don't believe it!

We *know* the Scriptures concerning keeping the body clean because it is the temple of the Holy Spirit, but do we believe it? Is it true that men and women no longer have the desire for tobacco and alcoholic beverages and narcotics and immoderation of any kind? That alcohol and tobacco are no longer big business because Christians believe what they know to be true about the effects on the body of alcohol and tobacco? We *know,* but we don't believe it!

We know that prayer is communion and fellowship with God, but do we believe it? We think the supreme test of prayer is our success in getting what we want in life and bending God's will to ours. Are churches filled to capacity each Sunday with people who meet to pray and give thanks to Almighty God for his goodness and mercy? They are not! Does nearly every home have its family altar and times of family prayer together? It does not! Is much prayer wont to be made in every need and blessing of life because we know all about prayer? Not so! We *know* the words, the phrases, the lingo and the "Amen," but we don't really believe.

We know the life to come is m
better than this vale of tears and
rows and a few joys, because
Scriptures say so. Is there then
weeping and wailing at funerals—c
joy and hope of reunion? Have
and women ceased trying to sust
earthly life by any and every mea
Certainly we know all about the re
rection and the permanence of the
and the much-moreness of life in
world to come, but we really don't
lieve it!

We know all about tithing and
portionate giving; how the work of
church prospers only as we give u
the church. We *know* our Lord said
ought to tithe and not forget
weightier matters of the law. We *k*
the law of the tithe has never been
pealed. Does the church then no lo
need bake sales, bazaars and fu
raising schemes? Is every church me
ber loyal to the church in his giving
well as in his prayers and his patien
Is the church no longer handicap
by lack of money, and are
churches easily built in these la
days? Is Christian education mu
more effective because we can aff
the best in equipment and suppli
Do pastors no longer need to take pa
time jobs or leave the ministry to s
port their families? Is the money
missions more plentiful than missi
aries? Does the church no longer ne
to beg and borrow? Sure, we know
about tithing and giving freely becau
our Lord gave freely for us—but
really don't believe it!

We *know* all about choosing the
whom we will serve and follow.
know all about eternal promises a
meekness and humility and patie
and long-suffering and peacemaki
and pureness of heart—but we do
believe in these things, really! Of
generations, we are most "in the kno
when it comes to things in this wo
and things in the next—but the g
seems to be growing ever wider betwe
our knowledge and our faith.

Model Predecessor

RECENTLY, after sixteen and on
half years as minister of the Fi
Christian Church of South Bend, In
Dr. Frank E. Davison was named pa
tor-at-large and the Rev. Hartford
Inlow was called to active leadership
the congregation. Before the Inlows a
rived in South Bend, Dr. Davison list
in the church paper the following "Te
Ways to Prepare for the Coming of C
New Pastor":

1. Pray for your new pastor in yo
private devotions and stop sometim
soon in the Chapel of the Inclusive C
cle to pray for him and for his famil
2. Write him a card or a letter to l
him know of your happy anticipation
3. Be faithful in attendance and su
port of your church this summer so th
when the new pastor arrives the churc
will be alive and in good financial co
dition.
4. Do not expect your new pastor
be just like any former pastor. Allo

"A splendid sermon, pastor!"

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N. Y. 16

to be himself and to build on his foundations.

Talk to your friends with positive ctancy about the coming of your pastor.

When he arrives in the city, don't his family apart. Being a minis- wife is no bed of roses and if the ister's children should have some liarities it may be because they had to play with the deacons' kids!

Don't expect your new minister to on you during the first six weeks or first six months he is in town. He have many new and important du- to perform and not all can be done nce.

Help your new minister to get ac- inted with you by giving him your e each time you meet him for the few months. You have only one e to learn. He has a thousand.

Share your joys and your sorrows your pastor. Do not expect him to w the needs of your family by men- telepathy.

0. Open your hearts and your nes to your new pastor. If he does know you at the end of three years ill perhaps be because he has never l his feet under your table.

Pulpit Calendar

Sept. 2—Labor Sunday.
Sept. 3—Labor Day.
Sept. 9—Rally Day.
Sept. 16—17th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 23—18th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 30—19th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 30-Oct. 7—Christian Education Week.
Oct. 7—World Wide Communion.
Oct. 14—Men and Missions Day.
Oct. 14-21—Churchmen's Week.
Oct. 21—Laymen's Sunday. World Order Sunday.
Oct. 21-27—United Nations Week.
Oct. 28—Reformation Sunday. World Temperance Day.
Oct. 31.—Reformation Day.
Nov. 1—All Saints' Day.
Nov. 2—World Community Day.
Nov. 4—24th Sunday after Pentecost.
Nov. 6—Election Day.
Nov. 11—Stewardship Day. Veterans Day.
Nov. 18—Thanksgiving Sunday.
Nov. 22—Thanksgiving Day.
Nov. 25—27th Sunday after Pentecost.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of national or religious significance.)

Volume 6

THE BOOKS

- Lamentations
- Ezekiel
- Daniel
- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
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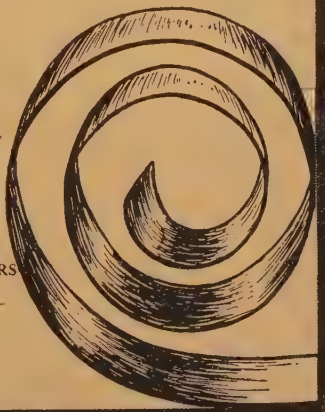

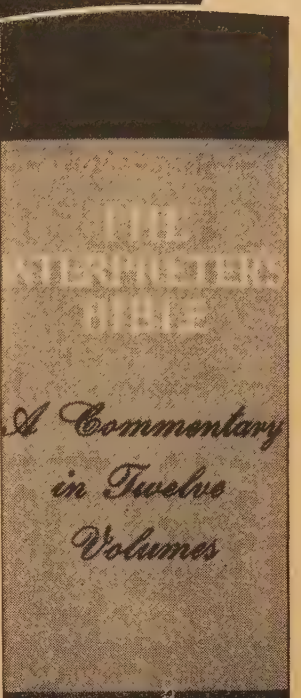

VOLUME 6

Lamentations
•
Ezekiel
•
Daniel
•
Twelve Prophets

ABINGDON

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Books for the Counselor

STRESS SITUATIONS. *Edited by Samuel Liebman. J. B. Lippincott, $3.00.*

THIS interesting book is a symposium of lectures and discussions addressed to doctors as they were given by seven noted psychiatrists. Samuel Liebman, M.D., is the medical director of the North Shore Health Resort at Winnetka, Ill., where the lectures were given to the residents in training at the resort and to interested physicians of the community.

The first series of lectures dealt with the broad topic of "Normal Emotional Development." As a logical extension of this theme, the second series was organized around the topic of "Emotional Reactions to Stress."

First of the seven contributing doctors is Lewis L. Robbins, director of the department of adult psychiatry of the Menninger Foundation. He discusses emotional reactions to frustration and failure. Dr. Francis J. Gentry, professor and head of the department of psychiatry of the University of Illinois College of Medicine, deals with emotional re tions to acute illnesses. Emotional re tions to catastrophe are treated by J John P. Spiegel, associate director the Insttitue of Psychosomatic a Psychiatric Research and Training Michael Reese Hospital.

The fourth lecture, on the emotion reactions to marriage, was presented Leo H. Bartemeier, M.D., associa professor of psychiatry, Wayne Univ sity School of Medicine. Dr. Boris Rubenstein, research associate at t Institute for Psychoanalysis and at t Institute for Psychosomatic and Ps chiatric Research and Training Michael Reese Hospital, discusses em tional reactions to fertility and sterilit Emotional reactions to divorce a presented by Dr. Harry H. Garn chairman of the department of neur psychiatry of the Chicago Medic School. The last lecture, dealing wi emotional reactions to death and su cide, is presented by Jules H. Masse man, M.D., professor of psychiatry an neurology, Northwestern Universi Medical School.

The book is primarily intended f physicians, surgeons and psychiatrist but it can be highly recommended the clergy. Although medical men ar psychiatrists have a language of the own, as do theologians, little of that evident in the book which can be rea ily understood by any educated la man.

Deep understanding of humanity evident in the entire book. The discu sions after each lecture are especiall interesting.

EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS AND WHAT YO CAN DO ABOUT THEM. *By Williar B. Terhune. William Morrow, $3.0*

THIS book defines personal menta hygiene as the art and science of s directing one's actions, thoughts an feelings that they will lead to menta stability, health, happiness and effi ciency.

The author bases his discussions o key facts gathered from many hour spent with thousands of people wh discussed with the psychiatrist the goo and bad techniques of personal menta hygiene.

The book is well organized and should prove to be very helpful to doc tors, ministers, social workers and teachers. In addition, the jacket sug gests that it be given to anyone these counselors are called upon to help. doubt if Dr. Terhune had any knowl edge of the blurb on the jacket until he read it in printed form. Although his book could be helpful to some who are disturbed by stresses, it could also aid a hypochondriac in finding still more ailments to enjoy. So I would not recommend that it be given to anyone who seeks the services of a counselor.

But the book is bound to be helpful to any person who counsels. While it does not reveal any startling insights not already known to trained counselors, it offers a good refresher course. From the viewpoint of a clergyman who

239 Years of Service

Love and Marriage

These, we are assured, "go together like a horse and carriage." Things which have been joined together, like bread-and-butter, salt-and-pepper, peaches-and-cream, had better not be parted. Their affinity belongs to the nature of things.

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s deeper insights, this book will be ful, also.

n Part I the author presents "The damentals of Personal Mental Hye." Psychological preparedness and ipment; the education of self; first for the adult, for older people, for dren and adolescents; and a review principles compose this part of the k.

'art II deals with "Techniques for eting Specific Psychological Emercies": the technique of imparting l news, accidents, crippling illness, tal illness, attempted suicide, loss of fidence, financial reverses and many ers. Anyone in a position to counsel h people will find this section of the k helpful.

After describing four kinds of psychists, Dr. Terhune concludes with an ellent mental hygiene creed. Those s who are consulted by many people o are spiritually disturbed will be ased to note the first statement of creed: "I believe in God, and with help I will make my life significant."

The clergy and other religious leadhave available a number of books aling with spiritual tensions. They ould not expect to find much help on t score in this book. However, since e author restricts himself to psychogical tensions and maladjustments, s book should be extremely helpful those of us who have no psychiatrist ailable to whom we can refer people ffering from psychological difficulties.

OW TO FREE YOURSELF FROM NERVOUS TENSIONS. *By Samuel W. Gutwirth. Regency Press, $3.95.*

N the introduction, Dr. Gutwirth writes: "We definitely know that eractive minds and bodies are the use of various illnesses. Failure to rex, fatigue and emotional states dispt the important systems in our dies."

This being the case, the author prents methods of relaxation. With many lustrations, the methods are described inutely, so that anyone who can read an follow the directions. Since Dr. utwirth knows that many people are o tense to take the time to relax, he rites convincingly even of relaxation uring activity!

In Part II, "Guide to Rational Livng," the author discusses a series of mely questions on the subject of tenons, questions that were evidently rought to his attention by patients ith whom he has consulted. A glosary, bibliography and index complete he book.—*Carl J. Scherzer, Chaplain, Protestant Deaconess Hospital, Evansille, Ind.*

N. B.

F Shakespeare and Hamlet could ever meet, it must be Shakespeare's loing. Hamlet could initiate nothing. Shakespeare could, in principle, make himself appear as Author within the play, write a dialogue between Hamlet and himself. The "Shakespeare" within the play would of course be at once Shakespeare and one of Shakespeare's creatures. It would bear some analogy to Incarnation.—*C. S. Lewis,* Surprised by Joy *(New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955). Used by permission.*

THE common man . . . believes only what he sees, and he sees only what he can put his hands on. Progress is made despite him, although for him. The common man is the enemy of culture. . . . The uncommon man . . . is

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unpopular and almost unconstitutional. —*Frank Lloyd Wright, in guest sermon at the Universalist Church of the Divine Paternity, New York city.*

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Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Ensli

And My Text Is . . .

FEW pulpit practices are more ancient and still common than that of quoting a verse out of its context. And few are more dangerous. A perfect example is found in Paul's word, "Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin [Rom. 14: 23]."

With an utter disregard for the context, which reveals this word as the sensible conclusion to a tightly knitted and extraordinarily wholesome argument regarding a problem of especial concern to first-century Christians, Augustine took this verse as the sheet anchor for his ominous contention: "The whole life of unbelievers is sin." All the deeds of non-Christians, even their virtues, are sin. Since it is by faith alone—and by "faith" he means the acceptance of Christian doctrine—that a man can please God, it seemed to Augustine certain, for was it not guaranteed by Paul, that before a man became a Christian his acts were uniformly vicious in the eyes of God. This sinister view was to bear much bitter fruit. Both Calvin and Luther repeated it with confidence, the one seeing the acts of unbelievers, "however splendid and excellent in appearance" they might be, as sin, the other equally insistent that "every one who lacks faith, while he does what is right, sins."

Despite the insistence of the bishop of Hippo and of those who read with his spectacles, this is not what Paul meant, as Chrysostom, among many others, so clearly saw: "All this [he is quoting Romans 14:23] is said by Paul with regard to the preceding argument: it is not a general maxim."

One of the real reasons for the misinterpretation was the failure to see what Paul did—and did not—mean by "faith." For a subsequent generation "faith" was speedily to become "the faith," that is, Christian doctrine. Certainly it has become such for Jude: "Contend for *the faith* which was once for all delivered to the saints." For Paul it is nothing of the sort. It is rather a quality of life—rich, radiant, vibrant—which actuates and characterizes the new man in Christ.

In Romans 14 his argument is clear, although the exact circumstance which prompted it may be at this remove a bit uncertain. In some of the groups of early Christians there was a tendency to regard certain foods, notably meat and wine, with suspicion, and an inclination to refrain from their use. Other Christians with a somewhat immature zeal for their new freed found especial satisfaction in their u not so much because they liked th taste as because it proved them to emancipated. The situation constitu an especially thorny problem for Pa always eager to keep his group in pea and unity. Forbearance was the esse tial quality. Each must be tolerant the other. In this particular circu stance, Paul seems to indicate that feels the scruples of the weak unfoun ed in real fact. The matters involv are actually of little consequence, a in the first half of the chapter he crac down on the censorious fussiness of t "weak." If they have their scrupl well and good; they are to realize, ho ever, that it is the concern of God—r of them—to pass final judgment.

But there is another side. No m lives to himself alone. Whether we w or not, we are our brother's keepe Thus there is a real danger lest tho who are convinced that they are qu innocent in partaking of these foods a in refraining from observing certa days and seasons may be a source danger to their less emancipated bret ren. If the latter see Christians so ac ing, they may well be lured into doi it too, and accordingly into acti against the dictates of their conscience Thus the strong, either unwittingly indifferently, may easily find ther selves in the role of injuring a broth for whom Christ died.

Hence Paul's conclusion: the act in itself of no consequence, but wh leads a man to act is of great concer If a man complies, not because he convinced that it is proper but becau he does not want to seem conspicuousl different or inferior, he has committe a sin, and a grievous one.

Thus interpreted, the word—so pe verse when yanked from its context— is in precise agreement with an earl gloss preserved in a sixth-century man uscript of Luke: "On the sabbath da seeing one working, Jesus said unt him: 'Man, if indeed thou knowest wha thou art doing, thou art blessed; but thou knowest not, thou art cursed and transgressor of the law.' "

Paul and this other nameless Chris tian may not have been privileged t take courses in psychology or even clin ical work in pastoral counseling; the sounded nonetheless a note which i timeless and which will bear repeatin without apology in the year of grac 1956.

By Albert Calhoun Pittman

Why All the Fuss About Sunday Business?

I saw in Judah men treading wine presses on the sabbath . . . and also wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens . . . brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath . . . Men of Tyre also . . . brought in fish and all kinds of wares and sold them on the sabbath . . . Nehemiah 13:15.

THESE are the words of Nehemiah reporting a trend toward Sabbath breaking in Judah five centuries before Christ. In different words, 2,500 years later, the *New York Times* recently reported a similar trend in our own nation. Said the *Times:* "The growing trend toward Sunday business has become one of the most controversial issues in retailing." To back up its statement, the paper in a long article cited increasing instances in which stores of all kinds are opening their doors to the Sunday shopper. But we who live in Dayton don't have to read the *New York Times* to learn about the business-on-Sunday trend. We have only to look around. Businesses once closed are now open. And the large suburban shopping centers that circle our city beckon us to work and shop.

Sunday business is not something entirely new in our community; for in years past the Ohio state law prohibiting non-essential business on the Sabbath has never been rigidly enforced. As a result a number of independent and isolated business establishments have been open on Sunday without public protest and these scattered businesses, without our realizing it, were the bedbeds of the present controversy. Last fall, the present situation developed. Four of the five large supermarket chains which had traditionally closed on Sundays announced a new policy of Sunday openings for their nearly 40 stores. Their reason: "competition from two large independent markets was forcing them." Suddenly, stores open for Sunday trade were no longer isolated exceptions; now they covered the city. Immediately, there was tremendous public protest. Irate letters poured into the newspapers. Appeals were made to the city commissioners who responded with strong statements criticizing the new policy.

Public Reaction

Labor unions called for legal action against the stores. The Knights of Columbus called for boycott. In both Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, statements of concern were read from the pulpits. And the church federation promptly called a series of meetings with representatives of the chains, the big independents, labor unions and civic and religious groups in hopes of finding a solution.

Because of the strong public reaction, one of the chains which had opened decided to return to its closed-on-Sunday policy in the interest of the community's welfare. But the others chose to "endure" public disfavor; confident that in a few months the storm of protests would subside, the churches would turn their zeal to other crusades, the criticism would give way to community acceptance of the new open-on-Sunday trend. Now, after seven months, the supermarkets are still open. And the grocers were partially right in their expectations. The loud protests have faded. The threats of boycott and legal action never materialized. And certainly a noticeable number in the community have accepted and utilized the doors open on the Sabbath. But the grocers were wrong in their expectations of the churches. Churches' protests continue. Their concern for the situation seems to be growing stronger rather than weaker. They refuse to accept the trend graciously; after seven unsuccessful months they continue to meet with the grocers in the hope of halting the Sunday shopping trend. Why? Why are the churches so insistent on keeping this controversy alive? Why do they deem this question of Sunday business so important?

'Specialness' of Sunday

The churches are convinced that if the supermarkets remain open on the Sabbath, it is inevitable that other stores will follow their lead and also open. This is especially true of the stores located in shopping centers. No hardware store, dime store, furniture store, bakery, dress shop or cleaner will long remain closed when potential customers are passing its doors in large numbers on their way to the market. And if the stores in the shopping center throw open their doors, then it won't be too long before downtown businesses throw open their doors to meet the competition (the *Times* article reports this is already happening in some midwestern cities; downtown department stores are now open for Sunday sales). The present trend can, step by step, open up the whole community to Sabbath business—with everyone expressing regrets and blaming the other fellow. When this happens, Sunday will have lost its "specialness" as a day to a very large

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ROBERT CALHOUN PITTMAN *is a member of the ministerial staff of the First Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio.*

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degree. Not many of you want to live in a community bound in a strait jacket of Sunday blue laws; but neither would you want to live in a place where Sunday has lost its "specialness." What makes Sunday so special? To know this will enable you to understand better why the Christian churches feel compelled to continue "the fuss about Sunday business."

Day of Worship

First, Sunday is special to Christians because it is a *day for worship*. Long before the church thought of Sunday as a time of rest, it was a time for worship with fellow Christians. The Christian Sabbath is not the same as the Jewish Sabbath. As the early church moved into the Gentile world, it broke with Jewish legalism and Sabbath observance on the seventh day. However, those early Christians felt a need to come together at appointed times to worship. So they began to meet on the first day of the week in commemoration of Christ's resurrection from the dead. And they met early Sunday morning because Sunday was not a holiday. It was a regular work day like all the others. In a letter written by Pliny to the emperor Trajan, which has been preserved, we read that these ancient Christians met shortly after the dawn on the first day of the week, sang a hymn to Christ, bound themselves by an oath to good living, shared a religious meal, and then went to their work and week's activities. Here was the beginning of the "specialness" of Sunday for the Christian community. Not just a regular day, but the Lord's Day on which the faithful gathered to commemorate his victory over sin and death and to rededicate themselves to his way. The Jewish Sabbath was a day of restrictions; the Christian Sabbath was a day of celebration and consecration.

Day of Rest

Through the centuries, Sunday has also been special as a *day of rest* in the Christian world. In the fourth century, after Christianity emerged triumphant from the martyrdoms and catacombs and was established as the religion of the empire, the Lord's Day was honored as a legal holiday. And as a legal holiday, it then became a day of rest. The old Jewish concept of Sabbath rest was borrowed and "baptized" into the church. And for the first time in the history of many people, men and women were given relief and rest from the burden of the week's labor. The Christian Sunday became a refuge of the poor and overworked; it brought rest to the tired bodies and renewal to weary spirits.

Finally, the Christian community has regarded Sunday as a *special day for the home and the family*. This emphasis was also borrowed from the Jewish Sabbath. In pious Jewish homes, the eve of the Sabbath is the night the family is together. It is the time the family shares together—and in sharing, draws closer together. This has become the Christian emphasis of Sunday, too—the time the family is able to do together the things that cannot be done on o days because of lack of time, the the family does together those th which strengthen the bonds of fel ship and love.

Among Christians, Sunday is a cial day for worship, rest and the f ily. If the present trend of busines Sunday continues, each of these terns is threatened. Indeed, they ready are. Already, because of opening of the supermarkets, there people denied the right to worship they must work on Sundays. Alre teen-age boys have had to drop ou youth groups because their jobs "carry-outs" at grocery stores req them to be there on Sundays. Alre certain families have no day toget So far, only a few families are involv But who can say how many there be five or ten years from now? Ma this controversy doesn't touch you rectly now, but what about then?

This is why the churches refuse bow gracefully to the trend. This is v they continue the fuss about Sun business. They are struggling to def your right to worship and your righ have a day with your family. T churches are keeping the controve alive today so your religious life a family life will not be threatened in years ahead.

The Decision Is Ours

What can you do to help? The m obvious thing is not to shop on Sun and thus encourage the trend. But th are other things you can do, too. Y can (1) send constructive letters to t businesses involved, (2) encoura groups to which you belong to take stand and make it known, (3) spe constructively to store managers c cerning your feelings, (4) discuss t issue with friends in the hope of ope ing their eyes to the potential thre and (5) re-evaluate your own obse ance of Sunday. Make sure that for y it is a day of worship, rest and fami sharing. Make sure that what you does not violate the Sunday of someo else.

This Sunday question is far from se tled. The trend can continue. Or it c be stopped. Much of the decision re with us. Sunday as a business day w become just another day. But Sund as a special day for God, the chur and our families is a day of gre blessing.

Fine Lines

SAVE us, we pray from getting s bound up in secondary pursui that we lose sight of what makes f true happiness. Bless us in our dail work, but let us not be consumed b it. Bless us in our recreation, but let u not forsake our responsibilities. Ble us in our homes, but keep us close t thee, that thy love may sweeten all ou relationships.—*From a pastoral praye by Warren A. Nyberg, First Methodis Red Wing, Minn.*

Among Us—

The Mail and Snapping Dogs

By Graham R. Hodges

Emmanuel Congregational, Watertown, New York

ST May 10 Arthur E. Summerfield, the Postmaster General, released e startling but not surprising news. ing 1955 exactly 5,880 mailmen e bitten by our American dogs. How y of these 5,880 were bitten twice lid not divulge.

major Ph.D. thesis awaits some oral candidate on this new addition uman knowledge: Character Anal- of Mailmen Bitten Compared to se Not Bitten. For the information uch candidates, 72 per cent of the 0 brave carriers were bitten below knee; 13 per cent, on hand or fore-; 12 per cent, above the knee; and er cent, "elsewhere."

What interests me is not the five usand plus unfortunates who got en, but the many more thousands braved much the same canine ks and snappings without getting ir skins broken. For in their success- safe deliveries of the United States il lies a moral for the church, and ecially for its ordained leaders.

For "How To Deliver the Mail De- te the Dogs" is the task of the urch, in the beginning, now and for- rmore. Was it not ever thus—yap- g dogs, full of more bark than bite, ing to bluff away or stop those who rried the message? And like good ilmen, God's messengers ignored m and proceeded with official busi- ss.

John and Peter got the best of the h priests largely by ignoring them d looking them straight in the eye. . Paul was pestered by Felix and her petty Roman officials but he was busy carrying the mail to let petty noyances bother him.

John Wesley was told by yapping shops to stop preaching in graveyards d back alleys. He responded by lmly riding his faithful horses on a ail delivery of 175,000 miles.

True, some dogs do bite. But, sad to y, many times the church has been ared away from issues by noise in- ead of teeth. We forget that behind us a Power, even greater than the nited States Government which will row its entire army, navy and airforce hind the delivery of a two cent postal rd. Behind a frank, bold, honest ser- on, preached in love, the power of od Almighty stands.

I know one church which for thirty ears has badly needed a new church hool building. Each time the pastor or Sunday school teachers brought the matter to a church vote it was defeated, largely because the church listened to the growls of a couple of supposedly generous St. Bernards in the back pew. Finally a group of younger parents ignored the rumbles and grumbles from the rear and erected a lovely educational plant.

Just as a dog can sense fear in a postman, or anybody, for that instance, and rushes in to take advantage of his emotional superiority, so can a congregation or the public sense fear in a pastor or leading church laymen. Then the bites follow.

Often as not the barking parishioner barks just to see if he can scare the preacher. If he can't, he usually stops barking and trots along to help deliver the mail and ward off others like himself. "Don't you touch him, he's my friend!"

Think of all the fine messages not delivered to their intended recipients because of barking dogs. Sermons cut here, passages left out here, entire topics omitted from a man's ministry or even from a whole denomination's ministry for fear of barking dogs.

All the dogs in this great dog loving land (for what true American doesn't love dogs?) can't stop the U. S. Mail. Despite rain, snow, heat, dark of night and canine fangs, the mail goes through. And all the barkings of citizens' councils, misguided American Legion pronouncements, peevish or petulant powerful church members, can't stop the gospel when the carrier proceeds straight ahead fearing no man or beast.

This being an election year, likely not much can be done to really stop those biting dogs. Our faithful postmen might best take acrobatic dancing lessons.

But for the carriers of God's gospel, the message is this: the only reason its yapping dogs are ever remembered is their connection with something greater and stronger than they were.

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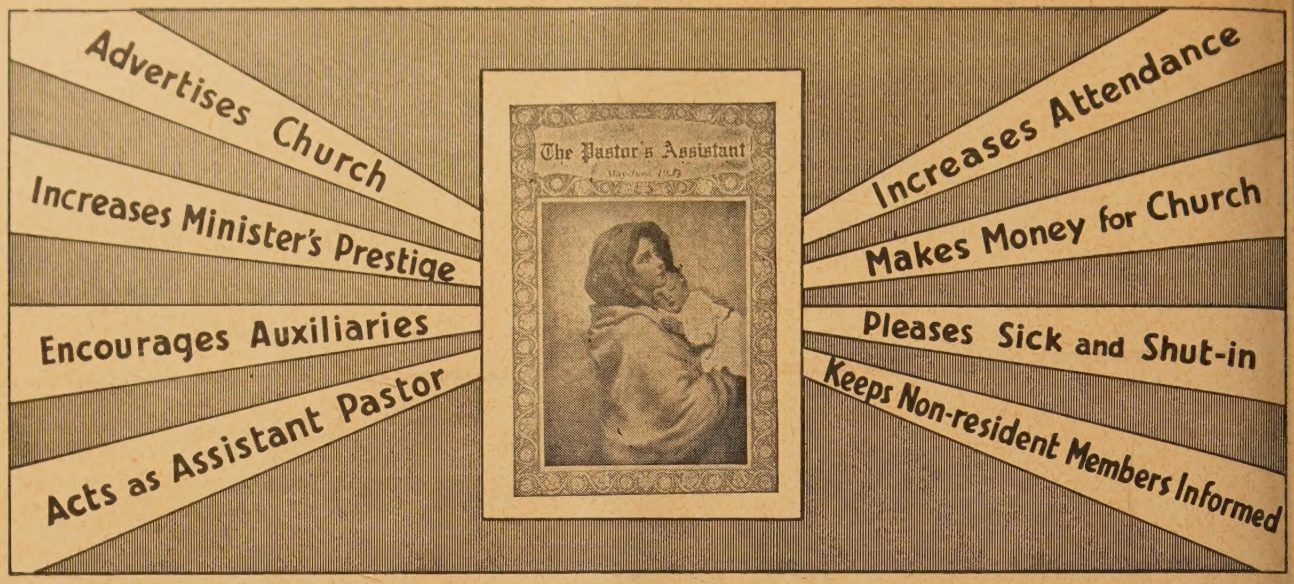

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